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Tree of Jesse Iconography in Northern Europe in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries

Susan L. Green

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This book is the first detailed investigation to focus on the late medieval use of Tree of Jesse imagery, traditionally a representation of the genealogical tree of Christ. In northern Europe, from the mid-fifteenth to the early sixteenth centuries, it could be found across a wide range of media. Yet, as this book vividly illustrates, it had evolved beyond a simple genealogy into something more complex, which could be modified to satisfy specific religious requirements. It was also able to function on a more temporal level, reflecting not only a clerical preoccupation with a sense of communal identity, but a more general interest in displaying a family's heritage, continuity and/or social status. It is this dynamic and polyvalent element that makes the subject so fascinating.

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Tradition and Transformation in Christian Art
The Transcultural Icon
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Susan L. Green

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Conventions

All biblical texts are taken from the Vulgate, with translations from the Douay-Rheims version, and all transcriptions and translations of inscriptions and foreign texts are my own, unless otherwise stated.

Introduction

The Tree of Jesse, an illustration of the prophecy of the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, was once one of the most prolific images in northern Europe, and from the midfifteenth to early sixteenth centuries could be found on every type of religious object. This book will consider various aspects of the late medieval use of the iconography and, rather than just confining itself to traditional representations, will extend the parameters to include works that have appropriated and adapted the imagery to convey nuanced and subtle shifts in meaning. Now mostly dislocated from their original surroundings, the function of these objects has become unclear to the modern viewer, but by recreating the circumstances in which the Tree of Jesse was employed, it will be shown that they can be seen to reflect, directly or indirectly, the concerns of a society on the brink of great change. By attempting to answer fundamental questions, such as who was commissioning these works and why, this study is able to produce valuable information that can be beneficial to both cultural and social historians, contributing to our overall knowledge of the period.[1]

The Tree of Jesse had been a frequently used image in manuscript illumination and stained glass in most of northern Europe during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[2] As has long been recognised, there was then a gradual slowing down in the frequency of representations from the fourteenth century onwards.[3] The renewed interest that took place in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries is therefore remarkable and requires explanation, particularly as it appears to have occurred in a clearly defined geographical area, centred on the Burgundian Low Countries, but also spreading to the south of Germany and other parts of northern France.[4] By looking at the subject across a wide range of media, in a manner that allows for sufficient attention to be paid to each object and its particular context, this book will explore the reasons behind this phenomenon. It will bring together works that in many instances have been largely neglected in the scholarly literature, but which, when examined against the theological and devotional background of the day, can be seen to have different functions and meanings for different social groups. By studying the Tree of Jesse and its associated iconography in light of its significance to these groups, we are able to see that it became an image of great complexity, one with deep roots in the religious beliefs of the

day, but one that could also function on a more temporal level, reflecting society's preoccupation with the role of women, identity and social status in the years leading up to the Reformation.

Scholarship to Date

Previous authors to consider the Tree of Jesse have, on the whole, focused on a much earlier period, and do not engage deeply with individual objects and their backgrounds. One of the first studies to be conducted was by Abbot Corblet, who wrote a short paper in 1860 that predominantly examined examples from northern France.[5] He made the novel suggestion that liturgical prophet dramas may have been influential in the development of Tree of Jesse iconography.[6] Corblet was followed by Émile Mâle, who, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, referred to the use of the motif in his well-known publications that explore the iconography of Christian art.[7] The importance of prophet dramas in the development of Tree of Jesse iconography was pursued further by Mâle, who claimed that the dramas had inspired Abbot Suger and his artists in the creation of the twelfth-century Jesse window at Saint Denis.[8] Mâle also stated that the full or 'true formula' of the Tree of Jesse that was conceived in this work, became the model for all future representations.

Ligtenberg, who considered the Tree of Jesse for his 1929 article that discussed the genealogy of Christ in the visual arts, again addressed the issue of the importance of the prophet dramas.[9] Disagreeing with Mâle, he concluded that they were not a prerequisite for the iconography at Saint Denis, and that there were too many variants in later representations for it to be the source. In 1934, Arthur Watson conducted the first detailed investigation into the use of the iconography, although he concentrated mainly on representations of the motif before the end of the twelfth century.[10] Watson also reflected at some length on whether prophet dramas were central to the development of Tree of Jesse imagery. Like Ligtenberg, he ultimately rejected this premise, although he did acknowledge, as seems reasonable, that both were expressions of the same idea.[11] Some later examples of the iconography were discussed by Mirella Levi D'Ancona in 1957, although these were examined only in relation to the concept of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.[12] More recently, Otto Böcher looked at examples in Germany for a brief paper written in 1973, and the motif has also been referred to by scholars primarily interested in the role of Saint Anne, the apocryphal mother of the

Virgin.[13] Where relevant, aspects of these previous studies will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

Most of the literature mentioned here consists of short articles, or merely refers to Tree of Jesse iconography as part of a wider discussion; none consider the iconography with regard to the type of questions that are the focus of this investigation. There are, however, two relatively recent works, more than twenty years apart, which have touched on some of the issues raised in this study. The first, by Werner Esser in Bonn, considered representations of the Holy Kinship in late medieval Germany and the Netherlands, identifying several examples where the Tree of Jesse had been used in conjunction with this iconography.[14] The second, by Séverine Lepape in Paris, looked in some detail at the development of the Tree of Jesse motif in France and Britain from the thirteenth to sixteenth centuries.[15] However, these theses are essentially surveys and although useful as sources of reference, are limited by the very nature of their broad approach.

Origin and History of Tree of Jesse Iconography

Before discussing the fifteenth and early sixteenth-century use of Tree of Jesse imagery, it is first essential to understand the origin and history of the iconography. The term 'Tree of Jesse', used so widely today, may not have been universally recognised in the late medieval period, as it does not occur in either scripture or medieval biblical exegesis. The Vulgate discusses the '*virga de radice Jesse*' (the rod, or shoot, out of the root of Jesse), and one of the earliest references to a pictorial representation of the subject, in the twelfth century, describes it as the '*Stirps Iesse*' (stem of Jesse).[16] In the vernacular it has been referred to in several different ways. Two early sixteenth-century German contracts describe it as the '*der stam Jesse*' (the root/trunk of Jesse), or *'König Jesse Mit ainem Aufwachsenden stamb*' (King Jesse with a growing root/trunk).[17] In addition, an English document of 1635, which mentions the original late medieval stained glass in the Lady Chapel of Winchester Cathedral, talks about a now lost window as painted with the 'Genealogie from the Root of Jesse'.[18] Consequently, even though *'boem van Jesse'* (tree of Jesse) can be found in a Flemish contract of 1474,[19] it seems that the use of 'Tree of Jesse' as a general term to classify the iconography was not commonplace until the eighteenth century.[20] Nevertheless, for the purpose of clarity, the term will be used throughout this book.

As an illustration of a prophecy fulfilled by the Incarnation, the Tree of Jesse, the genealogical tree of Christ, had been a favourite theme throughout the Middle Ages. Isaiah had prophesised that a Messiah would be born to the family of Jesse, the father of King David, Isaiah 11:1–3, '*et egredietur virga de radice Jesse et flos de radice eius ascendet*'.

> And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: the spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness. And he shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge according to the sight of the eyes, nor reprove according to the hearing of the ears.

This passage, combined with the genealogy at the beginning of Saint Matthew's Gospel, related again by Saint Luke, provided the textual basis for the iconography.[21] Support for the prophecy was found in Revelation 22:16, 'I Jesus have sent my angel, to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and stock of David, the bright and morning star', and also in the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans 15:12, 'And again Isaias saith: There shall be a root of Jesse; and he that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope'. It was further enriched at the beginning of the third century, when the early Christian author Tertullian linked the Vulgate Latin word for rod, *virga* with the Virgin *virgo* and the flower *flos* with Christ.[22]

> Is it not because he is himself the flower from the stem [rod] which came forth from the root of Jesse, while the root of Jesse is the house of David, and the stem [rod] from the root is Mary, descended from David, that the flower from the stem [rod], the Son of Mary, who is called Jesus Christ, must himself also be the fruit?

Tertullian's interpretation was reaffirmed in the fourth century by Saint Ambrose, in his text on the Holy Spirit, Book II, Chapter 5, verse 38, 'The root of Jesse the patriarch is the family of the Jews, Mary is the rod, Christ the flower of Mary, Who, about to spread the good odour of faith throughout the whole world, budded forth from a virgin womb'.[23] It was affirmed again by Saint Jerome in his letter XXII to Eustochium:

> There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall grow out of his roots. The rod is the mother of the Lord—simple, pure, unsullied; drawing no germ of life from without but fruitful in singleness like God Himself. The flower of the rod is Christ, who says of Himself: I am the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys.[24]

The messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are, therefore, realised in the incarnation of Christ through the lineage of David and the virgin birth. This concept, which was seen to emphasise the prefigurative significance of the biblical passage, became commonplace in early medieval commentaries.

Isaiah played a central role in providing scriptural authority for many of the

widely held beliefs regarding the Virgin, and he alone among the prophets seems to refer to her explicitly, Isaiah 7:14, 'Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel'.[25] This passage, along with that relating to Jesse, became an essential part of the liturgy for Advent, and the prophecy is further recalled in one of the Greater Antiphons, *O Radix Jesse*, which was prescribed by the eighth century for Vespers on the Wednesday of Ember week.[26]

In pictorial representations of the subject, it is possible to see an evolution in the iconography over a relatively short space of time.[27] The first images present the most literal interpretation of Isaiah's text and usually show Jesse alone, with the tree growing from his body. The placement of the trunk is varied, and can be depicted either growing from Jesse's head, shoulders, heart, stomach or groin. These different placements have been discussed by Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, who distinguishes between those she considers carnal, with their obvious association with the origin of life, and those she considers spiritual.[28] By the mid-fifteenth century, however, the most popular form of representation has the trunk growing from Jesse's heart.[29] Resting on the flowers of the tree are doves, which relate to the second part of Isaiah's prophecy and represent the gifts of the Holy Spirit.[30] The earliest known depiction of the subject occurs in a Bohemian manuscript dated 1086, which may have originated in the circle of the scriptorium at the Monastery of Saint Emmeram in Regensburg (National Library of the Czech Republic, MS XIV, A.13, fol.4v) (Figure 0.1).[31] This manuscript, known as the Vyšehrad Codex, contains the Coronation Gospels of King Vratislav II, the first monarch of Bohemia. The image is located on the lower register of the page preceding the Gospel of Saint Matthew, with a representation of the closed gate of Ezekiel, commonly interpreted as a prefiguration of the virgin birth, in the upper register.[32] The previous page features illustrations of the *virga Aaron* and the *virga Moses*, which were also seen as prefigurations of the Incarnation.[33] Therefore, all four images appear to relate to the virgin birth of Christ, even though the Virgin and Christ are not actually depicted. The *virga Aaron* and *virga Moses* have an obvious association with the *virga Jesse* and, consequently, it is not unusual to find Moses and/or Aaron appearing in later Tree of Jesse imagery.[34] In the Vyšehrad Codex, Isaiah is depicted with a scroll that bears the text of his prophecy '*et egredietur virga de radice Jesse*', which wraps around the seated figure of Jesse. A tree grows from beneath Jesse's foot and seven haloed doves perch on the blooming

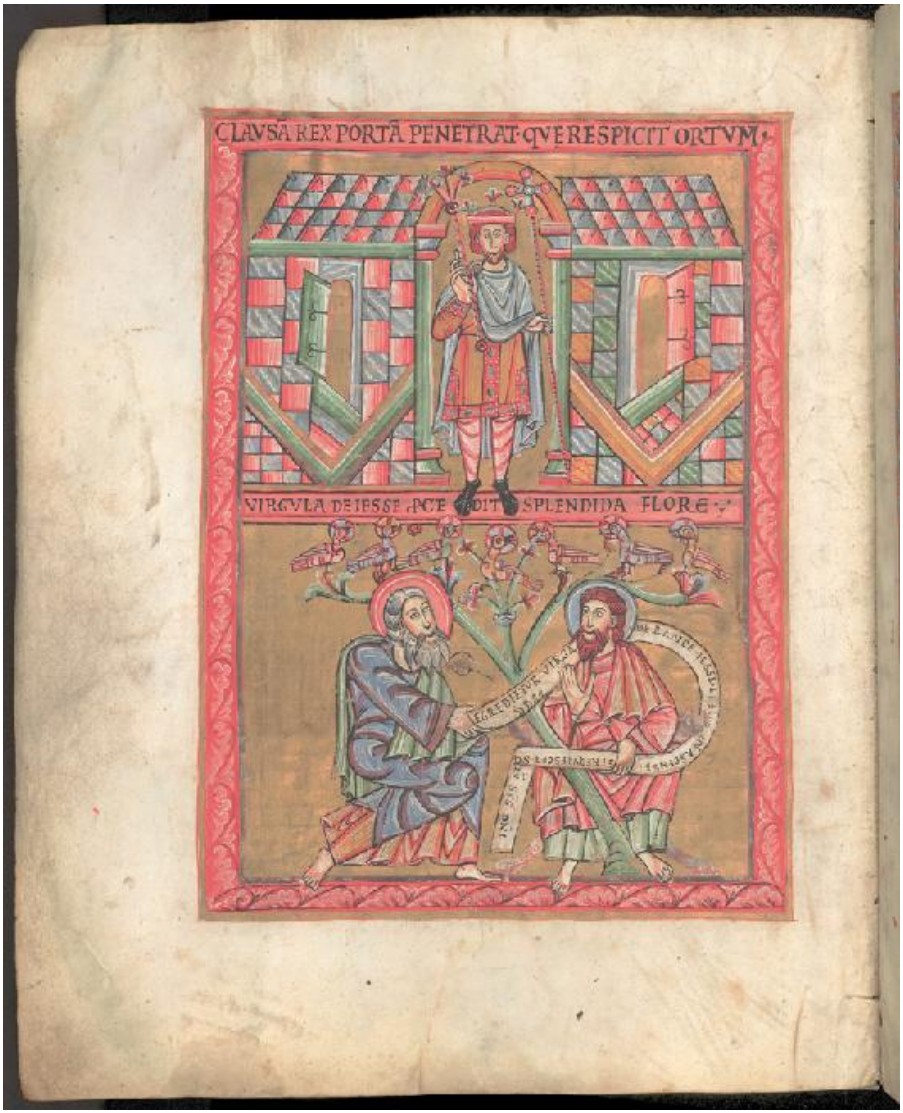


Figure 0.1 The Vyšehrad Codex, c.1086

National Library of the Czech Republic, Kodex Vyšehradský, Shelfmark: XIV.A.13.fol.4v

branches. Across the top of the image a Latin inscription reads '*Virgula de Iesse p[ro] cedit splendida flore'* (the rod of Jesse produces a splendid flower). A later representation of Jesse depicted with seven doves can be found in the Bible of Saint-Bénigne, (Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00002, fol.148r) (Figure 0.2), thought to date from the second quarter of the twelfth century. This miniature appears at the beginning of the Book of Isaiah, filling the centre of the opening initial of *Visio Isaie.*[35]

Figure 0.2 Tree of Jesse Detail From the Bible of Saint-Bénigne, Twelfth Century

Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00002, fol.148r

A further group of images incorporate the second prophecy of Isaiah, 'Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel'. These images emphasise the role of the Virgin as the mother of Christ. One of the earliest to assign her a preeminent position can be found in a manuscript from the Abbey of Cîteaux in Burgundy (Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00129, fols.4v and 5r) (Figure 0.3). This manuscript, the

S. Hieronymi Explanatio in Isaiam, contains Saint Jerome's commentary on Isaiah and has been dated to c.1125. Jesse appears asleep at the bottom of the tree; he holds the trunk with his left hand and where the trunk splits into two, the Virgin stands with the Christ Child in her arms. In her left hand she appears to hold a twig, presumably a further reference to the prophecy, and a single dove rests on her halo, which may intend to imply a dual meaning. On the opposite page, Isaiah stands in the initial letter with a scroll inscribed with the text of both of his prophecies, '*et egredietur virga*', and '*ecce virgo concipiet*'. He points to the image on the adjoining page to indicate that this is the fulfilment of those prophecies. This conflation of Isaiah's prophecies gives prominence to the Virgin's role in the Incarnation, and she may even form the *virga*, the shoot of the tree, as in a miniature from the twelfth-century Lambeth Bible (Lambeth Palace Library, Ms.3, fol.198r) (Figure 0.4).

Figure 0.3 *S. Hieronymi Explanatio in Isaiam*, c.1125

Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00129, fols.4v and 5r

In another manuscript of a similar date, also from Cîteaux, the Virgin can be seen enthroned in the tree (Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00641, fol.40v) (Figure 0.5). Known as the *Vitae Sanctorum*, or the *Légendaire de Cîteaux*, and dated c.1110–20, this miniature also incorporates four other Old Testament prefigurations: Daniel and the Lion's Den, Moses and the Burning Bush, Gideon and his Fleece and the Three Young Men and the Fiery

Furnace.[36] These prefigurations, which also came to be

Figure 0.4 Lambeth Bible, Twelfth Century

Lambeth Palace Library, MS3, fol.198r

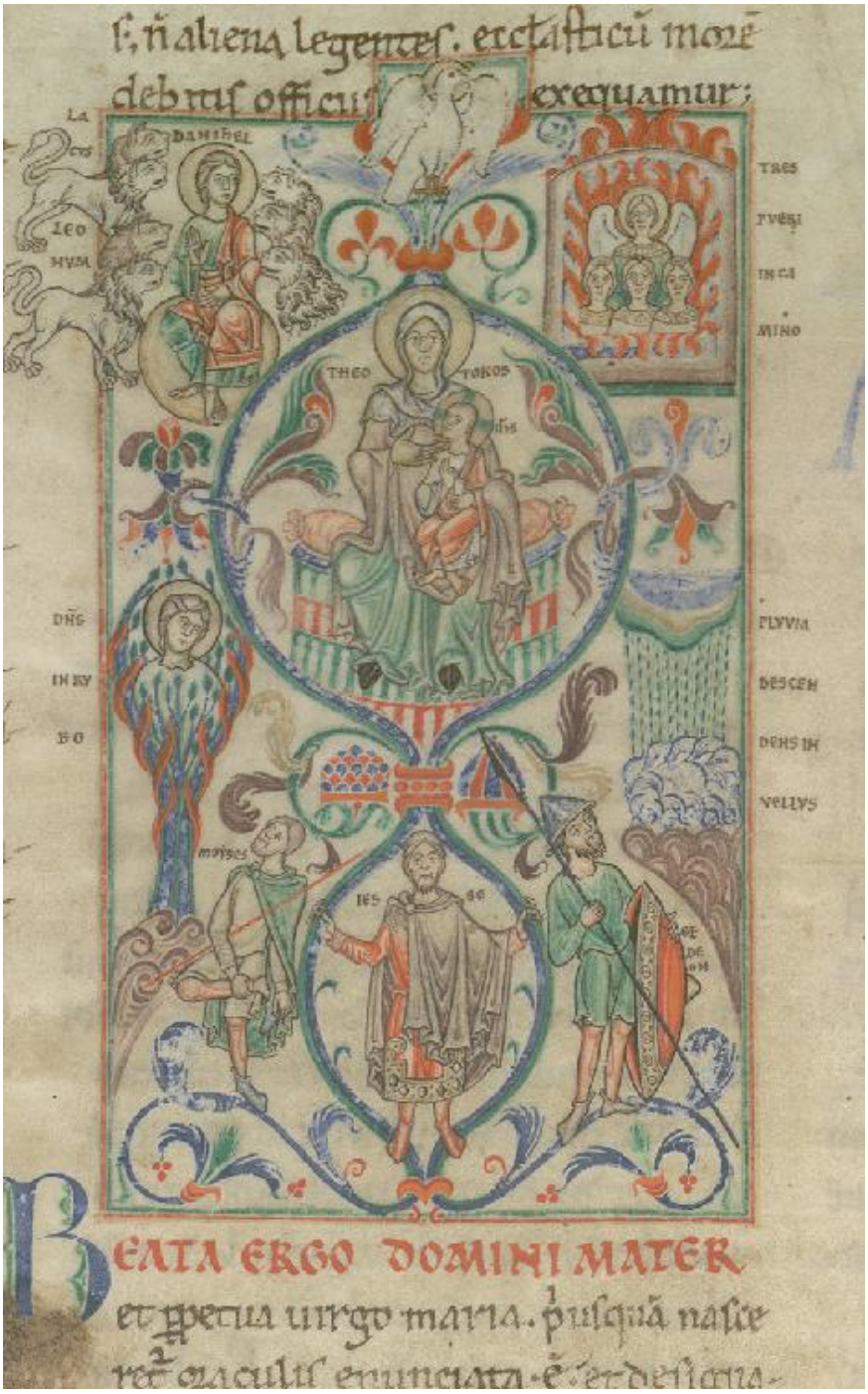


Figure 0.5 Tree of Jesse Detail From the *Légendaire de Cîteaux*, c.1110–20

Bibliothèque municipale de Dijon, MS00641, fol.40v

associated with the Virgin and Birth of Christ, can often be found represented

alongside Tree of Jesse iconography. In other miniatures, Mary appears without prefigurations, but with King David, occasionally Solomon, and sometimes prophets, as in two twelfth-century manuscripts in the British Library: the Shaftesbury Psalter (Lands-downe 383, fol.15r) and the Winchester Psalter (Cotton MS Nero C IV, fol.9r).[37] Examples can also be found in illuminated Bibles, where the Tree of Jesse was often used to illustrate the beginning of the Book of Isaiah or Gospel of Matthew, as in the twelfth-century Bible of Saint Bertin in Paris (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 16746, fol.7v), where a Tree of Jesse decorates the first initial of the *Liber generationis* of the first chapter of Matthew (Figure 0.6). Although not explicit from a reading of the Gospels, it is unsurprising that in time the Tree of Jesse also came to be seen as the genealogical tree of the Virgin and, as such, an affirmation of her Davidic and royal paternity.

This notion is evident in more complex representations that depict the extended genealogy from Jesse through David to the Virgin and Christ. In these images, Jesse is shown sleeping at the base of the tree in a semi-reclining position, sometimes under a tent-shaped canopy.[38] The tree that grows from his body branches out to accommodate the ancestors of Christ, who are depicted among the foliage. David is almost always shown with his harp, particularly in later representations, and sometimes Solomon can be identified from his turban. The number of secondary ancestors featured varies, depending on the space available. Crowning the tree are the Virgin and Christ, shown either separately or together, and sometimes surrounded by doves. It is also common to see prophets with scrolls inscribed with a quotation from the text of their prophecies; they are often shown in an animated state and may point to Christ as the foretold Messiah. Many early stained glass windows also include other attributes around Jesse; examples include a suspended lamp, which Watson has suggested may be symbolic of the eternal light of Christ.[39]

The earliest known example of this type of extended iconography appeared in the stained glass window commissioned in 1144 by Abbot Suger for the new choir of Saint Denis in Paris.[40] Unfortunately, this window has been extensively altered by restoration, although it is believed that the Jesse window located beneath the rose at the west end of Chartres Cathedral, dated only a few years later and considerably better preserved, is an almost identical copy of Suger's window (Figure 0.7).[41] Suger's design appears to have been popular for stained glass, and many twelfth- and early thirteenth-century windows throughout northern Europe are thought to have derived from the Saint Denis and Chartres model.[42]

By the mid-fifteenth century, the Tree of Jesse was a well established and familiar typological motif, when it seems there was a standardisation in pictorial representations of the subject. The most common number of kings

depicted was now twelve, which was probably linked to the idea of the twelve tribes of Israel. This appears to derive from Acts 7:8, which states that Abraham's son was Isaac and that his son was Jacob, the father of the twelve patriarchs who were the founders of the twelve tribes of Israel. This was perhaps also intended to provide an analogy with the twelve apostles, or the twelve fruits on the Tree of Life.[43] When named, the kings usually follow the order of twelve of the fourteen kings described by Matthew, starting with David, before the transmigration of Babylon.[44] Although by now commonplace, this was not an entirely new idea, as a twelfth-century precedent for the depiction of twelve kings can be found on the north doorway of the Baptistery at Parma. In addition, the

Figure 0.6 Bible of Saint Bertin, Twelfth Century

Bibliothèque nationale de France, Latin 16746, fol.7v

Figure 0.7 Tree of Jesse Window, Twelfth Century, Chartres Cathedral

(Photo: © Dr Stuart Watling)

kings were now often shown as half figures in blossoms of flowers on the tree;

a precedent for this type of representation can be found in a Parisian *Bible Historiale* dated c.1414–15 (Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, Ms.9002, fol.223r) (Figure 0.8).[45] Seven doves, representing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, also became rarer, presumably because the image now appears to focus more on the genealogy of Christ and

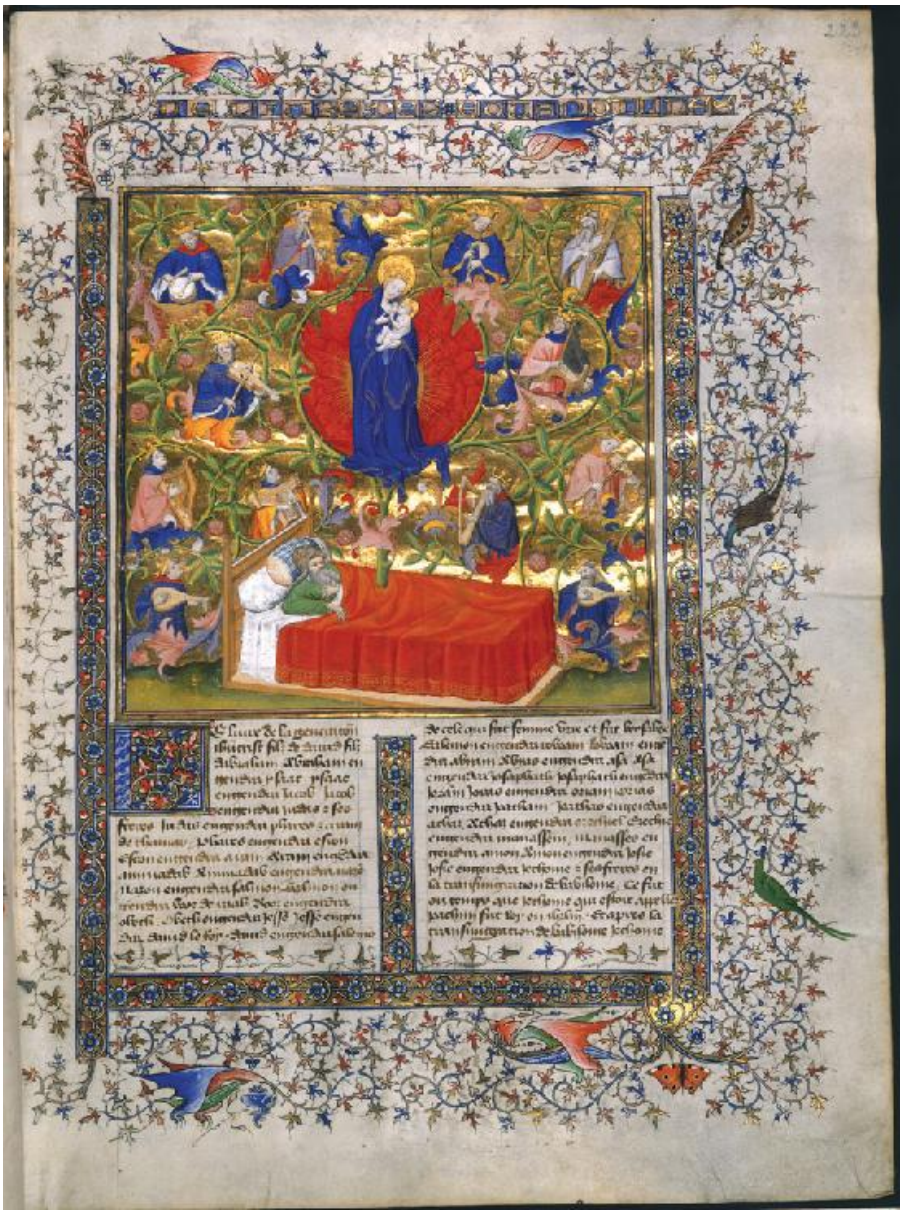


Figure 0.8 Parisian *Bible Historiale*, c.1414–15

Royal Library of Belgium, Ms.9002, fol.223r

the Virgin, and less on a literal translation of the messianic prophecy. Despite this, it remains usual to find two or four prophets depicted on either side of Jesse. As will be seen in the following chapters, representations of a seated Jesse also became more widespread, particularly in northern France and the Netherlands, and representations of the Virgin on a crescent moon, the antique symbol of chastity, and/or surrounded by a mandorla, became increasingly frequent. This was presumably a reference to the Woman of the Apocalypse, who was exegetically identified with the Virgin and became a key allegory for the Virgin's involvement in man's salvation.[46]

Corblet had suggested that representations of the tree growing out of Jesse's body may have been designed to provide an analogy with Adam, who lay asleep on the ground while God created Eve from one of his ribs. The Virgin on the Tree of Jesse was seen by Corblet as the Second Eve, who has been sent to redeem the first. Watson, however, believed another analogy was closer, that the Tree of Jesse, like the Tree of the Cross, was a tree of salvation.[47] This argument appears logical; consequently, it seems likely that the Tree of Jesse can be seen as part of a much wider tradition in Christian art, alongside the Tree of Knowledge, the Tree of Life, the vine and the physical tree from which the True Cross was made, all of which allude to a general concept of salvation.[48] As Watson identified, the *virga Jesse* and *virga Crucis* were brought into close association at an early date in the writings of Peter Damian, the eleventh-century monastic leader and church reformer whose works were widely distributed and remained popular for many generations.[49] Damian followed his homily, *In nativitate Beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, with the *De exaltatione Sanctae Crucis*. Introducing this, he wrote, 'Out of the *virga* of Jesse we came to the *virgam* of the cross and the beginning of redemption was the conclusion'.[50] Damian, therefore, saw the Tree of Jesse as the beginning of the story of salvation, which led to man's redemption through the Tree of the Cross. The placing of a Cross on the altar in front of an image of the Tree of Jesse would provide a similar association of ideas. In the early sixteenth century, many Antwerp carved altarpieces and Breton windows actually combined the Tree of Jesse with the Crucifixion in a single work, highlighting the humanity of Christ and adding a Eucharistic dimension to the motif. These images, which provide a complete visual rendition of the story of salvation, are examined in further detail in Chapters Five and Six. Some pictorial representations link the Tree of Jesse with other religious trees, for example, the Saint-Omer Psalter of c.1330–40 in the British Library (Yates Thompson 14 fol.7r), depicts a historiated *Beatus* initial with a Tree of Jesse and historiated border containing nine roundels that include the Tree of Knowledge. Obvious parallels also exist with the Tree of Consanguinity or the *Lignum Vitae* of Saint Bonaventure.

Certain scholars have associated renewed interest in the Tree of Jesse in the fifteenth century with the belief in the concept of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. The first to propose this was Mâle, who briefly examined the reappearance of the iconography in French stained glass and printed Books of Hours between 1450 and 1550.[51] He suggested that its use at this time was primarily because the motif had become some kind of symbol of the concept. Belief in the Immaculate Conception was a subject of great controversy among theologians during the fifteenth century, and although it did not become a dogma of the church until the nineteenth century, it was widely supported by many influential religious orders, particularly the Franciscans, Carmelites and Benedictines. The theory that the Tree of Jesse had become an expression of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was discussed in more detail by D'Ancona.[52] D'Ancona supported Mâle's premise, but also allowed for the use of the motif by those opposed to the concept. D'Ancona differentiated between the Immacu-list tree, which she believed referred specifically to Mary, and the Maculist tree, which she believed referred specifically to Christ. This hypothesis will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

The brief study conducted by Böcher in 1973 also identified that the Tree of Jesse had become particularly fashionable again in Germany from the 1460s, particularly along the Rhine.[53] Yet Böcher does not single out the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin as the motivation for this renewed use, but relates it more to a wider interest in the matrilineal genealogy of Christ. Böcher is supported by more recent studies that focus on Saint Anne, such as those by Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn, Virginia Nixon and Jennifer Welsh, which associate the late medieval use of the Tree of Jesse with the rapid expansion of the cult of the Virgin's mother in Germany and the Low Countries.[54] Although the examination of the iconography in these texts is cursory and restricted to few examples, all agree that images of the Holy Kinship and Tree of Jesse became popular during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries to convey the various familial relationships described in the apocryphal Protoevangelium of Saint James, the Pseudo Matthew and the Golden Legend, Jacobus de Voragine's widely read anthology of the saints' lives.

This argument appears to be corroborated by the surveys undertaken by Esser and Lepape, who give many examples that illustrate the renewed interest in both Holy Kinship and Tree of Jesse iconography that occurred in Germany, the Netherlands, and parts of northern France, from c.1450 to c.1550.[55] However, as neither author considers individual works in any depth, they are unable to shed further light on exactly how the iconography might have functioned in relation to patronage and location. This book will attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature, and address some of the previous

assumptions made about the late medieval use of Tree of Jesse iconography.

Methodology

The doctoral thesis of 2014, on which this book is based, contains many more examples than is possible to include here, however, the objects examined in the following chapters are representative of the wider milieu. Works discussed date primarily from around 1450 to 1520, as this is the period in which the majority of surviving objects were made. However, in order to understand how the Tree of Jesse functioned and why it was such a popular choice among late medieval patrons, it has been necessary to be flexible: earlier works that set a precedent, and later works that illustrate just how the iconography persisted in some areas, are also considered. The choice of objects discussed and their geographical range has, to a certain degree, been pre-determined by patterns of survival: in addition to the devastation wreaked by fire, neglect, changing tastes and two world wars, this relates to a large extent to the progress of the Reformation. In Germany, for example, the Rhineland remained mostly Catholic, with some pockets of Lutheranism; which meant that, on the whole, churches were not desecrated.[56] Conversely, in the Netherlands, in areas where Calvanism prevailed, there was universal iconoclasm and the systematic destruction of devotional images.[57]

The objective of this investigation was to marry an iconological analysis with a close visual examination, paying attention to each object's social and religious background. The initial stage was to assemble a corpus of works. Once this was done it was then possible to identify thematic and geographical clusters of use. The objects selected for further analysis were primarily chosen because they presented rich possibilities for further investigation: certain works were undergoing restoration, affording the opportunity for unparalleled access; or the existence of primary evidence provided valuable contextual information. Since the Tree of Jesse motif appears in a variety of media, in order to understand the full complexity of its application, it was important to investigate many different types of work, from monumental carved altarpieces and stained glass to much smaller and more private devotional objects. Few of these works have been the subject of any detailed study, yet a focused analysis, combined with information gleaned from contemporary texts, meant that it was possible to draw conclusions regarding a particular work's origin, patronage, audience and function, which helped in understanding the adoption and transformation of the imagery. Due to the nature of the evidence, the

structure of each of the following chapters is slightly different. In some cases several works are considered together, illustrating the subtlety and evolution of the iconography. In other instances, individual objects are examined in greater detail, in order to demonstrate just how the Tree of Jesse could function on multiple levels. The aim is to reveal the multifaceted visual potential of the Tree of Jesse motif in the late medieval period.

Chapter Structure

This book begins with an examination of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Mirror of human salvation) manuscript and subsequent blockbooks, to establish what impact they may have had on the use and evolution of Tree of Jesse iconography. Introduced in the early fourteenth century, this text uses the prophecy of Isaiah as a prefiguration of the Birth of the Virgin. As discussed earlier, by the twelfth century the Virgin often occupied a preeminent position in the Tree of Jesse motif, and it is unsurprising that the image was used in other essentially Marian contexts. It can be found for instance in the *Speculum Virginum*, a guide book for nuns dating from the twelfth century and, from an early date, in Books of Hours of the Virgin, such as the thirteenth-century Salvin Hours (British Library, Add. Ms.48985, fol.1v), where it illustrates the first letter of Matins. However, following the introduction of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, it became increasingly common to find the Tree of Jesse used to illustrate the Virgin's birth and genealogy, and the advent of printing meant this text became one of the most widely circulated and influential works of the late Middle Ages. The *Speculum humanae salvationis* also placed a new emphasis on the role of the mother of the Virgin in the story of salvation. The myth woven around the life of Saint Anne addressed many of the perceived inconsistencies in the biblical narrative, and her veneration had been promoted by many distinguished theologians during the latter part of the fifteenth century, leading to an upsurge in devotion.

Chapter Two will consider this flourishing cult of Saint Anne, and, by association, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, to determine what influence this might have had on representations of the Tree of Jesse. If Jesse was seen to provide the ancestors of Christ to the end of the Old Testament period, Saint Anne, according to the apocrypha, was the source of the immediate family of Christ in the New Testament period. Using primarily visual evidence, this chapter will explore how those promulgating the cult of Saint Anne used Tree of Jesse iconography to communicate the great power assigned to the saint by virtue of her holy genealogy, and question their objectives.

Lay confraternities dedicated to Saint Anne were often administered by religious orders and provided an important source of income. In the increasing competition for wealthy benefactors, it was important that these communities were able to project a strong identity, and it seems that the Tree of Jesse was

an image that could be easily appropriated and adapted to reflect their own particular doctrine. By focussing on individual works, Chapter Three will consider just how the motif came to be exploited by the Carmelites and Dominicans, who both appear to have used it to convey their claim to a special relationship with the Virgin, and to imply an ancient and eminent tradition. It will also explore how the Dominicans and other orders might have used the iconography to help engender a sense of collective identity.

Chapter Four takes the form of a case study, looking at a southern German altar-piece from a little-known healing shrine at Schöllenbach, in the Odenwald district of Germany. After its provenance has been established, this altarpiece will be considered within a historical framework, which not only allows for certain conclusions to be drawn regarding the circumstance of its patronage, but also reveals how a contemporary audience might have viewed the work. From its earliest depiction in the Coronation Gospels of King Vratislav II, the use of Tree of Jesse iconography as a way of establishing an analogy between divine and temporal royalty has a long history. It will be shown that, in addition to its spiritual function, its use at Schöllenbach can also be seen to express a preoccupation with dynastic aspirations and the fundamental desire to produce healthy offspring.

The Tree of Jesse motif can be found in more than 20% of surviving Antwerp carved altarpieces dating from the early sixteenth century. Chapter Five will explore the function of the iconography in these altarpieces, to try to establish why it was so popular among Antwerp workshops and their patrons. Although the motif predominantly appeared in the lower register of the carved *caisse*, this chapter will also consider in detail three works: the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe altarpieces, where it was accorded a central position. Previous scholarship has tended to assume that, in order to speed up production, there was a great degree of standardisation between Antwerp carved altarpieces. An examination of the physical evidence will try to ascertain to what extent this hypothesis might be true, and a comparison of the overall iconography of these three altarpieces will attempt to determine just how much they may have been modified to suit the specific requirements of a patron.

Following the end of the Hundred Years' War, the healthy economic climate led to the widespread rebuilding of rural churches in parts of northern France, and there was a vast increase in demand for Tree of Jesse windows, firstly in Normandy, and then in the Champagne region and Brittany. The final chapter will not only examine the nature of the renewed interest in the motif in northern France, but will also consider the role of German and Netherlandish artists and models in the dissemination of new forms of representation.

The different parts of this study will present diverse but related aspects of the late medieval use of Tree of Jesse iconography. Its objective is to try to

establish, as fully as possible, the circumstances in which the Tree of Jesse was employed for individual groups of objects, the purpose of these objects, and how the function of the motif might have differed according to its use and location. This not only allows for an investigation into the richness and complexity of the iconography, but also provides a valuable insight into the factors that influenced the choices made by donors, whether individuals, confraternities or religious orders. Furthermore, interaction between different centres of production can be explored, and it is possible to see if and how ideas were exchanged through trade and the movement of artists. The extensive material collected for this investigation means that broader questions can also be asked: how and why Tree of Jesse iconography became so widespread in the years leading up to the Reformation, and what it can tell us about the religious beliefs and cultural attitudes of the day.

Notes

1. For a discussion of how artefacts and iconography can be used to widen our view of history see Steve Lubar and William David Kingery eds., *History From Things: Essays on Material Culture* (Washington, DC.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993).

2. Although the subject can be found in southern Europe, it appears that it was never as popular as it was in the north. Examples in Italy include the twelfth-century baptistery doors of San Zeno in Verona, the thirteenth-century doors of the baptistery in Parma, the late-medieval frescoes in San Francesco in Pistoia and Santa Croce in Rome, and the sixteenth-century mosaic in San Marco, Venice. The motif was also the subject of some panel painting, such as the late fifteenth-century work by Matteo da Gualdo in the Museo Civico di Gualdo Tadino in Umbria. Tree of Jesse iconography was also employed in eastern Europe. For a discussion of some examples see Michael D. Taylor, 'A Historiated Tree of Jesse', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, No. 34/35 (Washington 1980/81), 125–176, and Pippa Salonius, '*Arbor Jesse—Lignum vitae*: The Tree of Jesse, The Tree of Life and the Mendicants in Late Medieval Orvieto', in Pippa Salonius and Andrea Worm eds., *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought*, International Medieval Research 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 213–241. Salonius discusses the relationship between an early fourteenth-century depiction of the Tree of Jesse and its relationship to Byzantine precedents. An appendix lists some monumental examples of the Tree of Jesse in eastern Europe. In addition, several fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century examples can be found in Spain. Apart from some twelfth-century precedents, there had been few other early representations and its appearance at this time has been put down to the presence of northern artists. See Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 12–20.

3. For a discussion of the decline in representations of the motif in northern France from the fourteenth century see Séverine Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge: l'iconographie de l'Arbre de Jessé en France du Nord et en Angleterre, du XIIIe siècle au*

XVI siècle (PhD Diss: l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, 2007), 122–123. For a discussion of the decline in representations in Germany see Otto Böcher, 'Zur Jüngeren Ikonographie der Wurzel Jesse', *Mainzer Zeitschrift, Festschrift für Fritz Arens Mittelrheinisches Jahrbuch für Archäologie, Kunst und Geschichte*, No. 67/68 (Mainz, 1973), 156–157.

4. The Burgundian Low Countries was the region now largely known as the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Artois and French Flanders, and a small part of western Germany. However, to speak of 'Germany' at this date is an anachronism, as the country was not formally united into a politically and administratively integrated nation state until the nineteenth century. The term 'German speaking provinces' might be more accurate therefore when discussing the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

5. Jules Corblet, 'Étude Iconographique sur L'Arbre de Jessé', *Revue de l'Art Chrétian* (Paris, 1860), 3–39. Corblet states that his is the first study of the iconography, apart from a brief nine-page paper previously published by Abbot Pouqet.

6. The prophet dramas, which according to Corblet were first introduced in the tenth century at Saint Martial in Limoges, took place during the liturgy on Christmas day, when 'Isaiah' would be called forward during the service to recite the text of his prophecy. Corblet, 'Étude Iconographique sur L'Arbre de Jessé', 5–6.

7. Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France: étude sur du Moyen Age et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1898), 218–223; *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age en France: étude sur l'iconographie du Moyen Age et sur ses sources d'inspiration* (Paris: Librairie A. Colin, 1908), 72–73 and 227, and *L'art religieux du XIIe siècle en France: étude sur les origines de l'iconographie du Moyen Age* (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1922), 147 and 171–175.

8. Mâle, *L'art religieux de XIIe siècle en France*, 147 and 171–175.

9. R. Ligtenberg, 'De Genealogie van Christus in de beeldendekunst der Middeleeuwen voornamelijk van het Westen', *Oudheidkundig Jaarboek*, Vol. 9 (1929), 2–54.

10. Arthur Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse* (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1934).

11. Watson, 'Drama and the Tree of Jesse', in *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 9–36.

12. Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (New York: College Art Association of America and Art Bulletin, 1957), 46–50.

13. Böcher, 'Zur Jüngeren Ikonographie der Wurzel Jesse', 153–168, Kathleen Ashley and Pamela Sheingorn eds., *Interpreting Cultural Symbols: Saint Anne in Late Medieval Society* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), Virginia Nixon, *Mary's Mother, Saint Anne in Late Medieval Europe* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), and Jennifer Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Oxford and New York: Routledge, 2017).

14. Werner Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe, Studien zu einem spätmittelalterlichen Bildthema in Deutschland und den Niederlanden* (PhD Diss: Universität Bonn, 1986). Mellie Naydenova-Slade's thesis also considers examples of the Holy Kinship, but does not particularly discuss Tree of Jesse iconography. See Naydenova-Slade, *Images of the Holy Kinship in England, 1170–1525* (PhD Diss: Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2008).

15. Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*.

16. This appears in Abbot Suger's *De Administratione*, where he describes the 'excellent variety of new windows' for the choir of Saint Denis, '*Vitrearum etiam nouarum praeclaram varietatem, ab ea prima quae incipit a* **Stirps Iesse** *in capite ecclesiae*' Abbot Suger's *De Administratione* (*Sugerii Abbatis Sancti Dionysii Liber de rebus in administratione sua gestis*) is transcribed and translated in full by Erwin Panofsky, in *Abbot Suger on the Abbey Church of Saint Denis and its Art Treasures*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979). The relevant section appears on 72–73, where Panofsky translates *Stirps Iesse* to Tree of Jesse. In addition to the definition of *stirps* as the 'lower part of the trunk, including the roots, a stock, stem or stalk', in Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), a second meaning 'of persons' is also proffered, which can refer to stock, race, family or lineage.

17. See the 1513 contract for the Saint Anne altarpiece in Kempen and the 1515 contract for the Saint Anne altarpiece for the Nikolauskirche in Feldkirch. Both are transcribed in Hans Huth, *Künstler und Werkstatt der Spätgotik* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967), 127 and 132. Today the iconography is still commonly referred to in German as *Wurzel Jesse* (Root of Jesse).

18. For further details of this document see R. N. Quirk, 'A Tour of the Cathedral Before the Civil War', *The Winchester Cathedral Record*, No. 22 (1953), 9–15.

19. This contract, between Pieter van den Kike (glazier) and Garcia de Contreras for stained glass windows for the cloister of the Observant Friars in Bruges, is transcribed and translated in Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, *Artistic Patronage in Bruges Institutions, c. 1440–1482* (PhD Diss: Santa Barbara University, 1992), 531–532.

20. Scillia has attributed the invention of the term to Ducange. Under Jesse in his Latin Glossary, *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Paris, 1733), Ducange quotes the fourteenth-century account of the purchase of a Canterbury candelabrum in the year 1097 by Hugo de Flori '*Candelabrum etiam magnum in choro aerum, quod Jesse Vocatur*'. He then conflates the term *quod Jesse Vocatur* (that is called Jesse) with his own definition of medieval candelabra, *arbores*, to create his own interpretation *'Arboris Jesse'* or 'Tree of Jesse'. Its association with the Saint Denis window was assured when Ducange included, under his entry for Jesse, Suger's text and description. See Charles Edward Scillia, *The Textual and Figurative Sources of the Stirps Jesse in the First Half of the Twelfth Century with Special Reference to the Rhine-Meuse Area* (PhD Diss: Bryn Mawr College, 1977), Chapter One, note 11.

21. Matthew 1:2–16 and Luke 3:23–38. There are, however, several differences between these genealogies. Matthew begins with Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, and ends with Joseph, while Luke traces the line in reverse order from Joseph to Adam. From Abraham to David the genealogies of Matthew and Luke are almost identical, although after David they are different. Early theologians tried to explain the difference by saying that Matthew described Joseph's genealogy while Luke described Mary's. To demonstrate that the prophecy is related to both genealogies, there are some examples where the Tree of Jesse is depicted with the two evangelists. See for example the painted exterior wings of the Brussels Saluces retable, now in the Musée de la Ville, Brussels.

22. '*an quia ipse est flos de virga profecta ex radice Iesse, radix autem Iesse genus David, virga ex radice Maria ex David, flos ex virga filius Mariae qui dicitur Iesus Christus, ipse erit et fructus?*' See Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: De Carne Christi liber, Treatise on the incarnation*,

Chapter 21, lines 25–28 (London: SPCK, 1956), 73. In this translation *virga* has been translated to stem instead of rod.

23. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Vol. 10 (St Ambrose: select works and letters) (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1898), 295.

24. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Vol. 6 (St Jerome: select works and letters) (Oxford: Parker, 1893), 114.

25. '*Propter hoc dabit Dominus ipse vobis signum: ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium, et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel'*. Jeremiah 31:22 has also been interpreted as a reference to the virgin birth, 'How long wilt thou be dissolute in deliciousness, O wandering daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: a woman shall compass a man'. For a full discussion of the importance of the prophecies of Isaiah for the cult of the Virgin see John F. A. Sawyer, *The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

26. A popular fifteenth-century German hymn, still sung at Christmas, is *'Es ist ein Ros' entsrpungen, Aus einer Wurzel zart, Als uns die Alten sungen, Aus Jesse kam die Art* (A rose has sprung up, from a tender root. As the old ones sang to us, Its lineage was from Jesse).

27. The Tree of Jesse features in three major dictionaries of iconography; these include examples of all types of representation. See Gertrud Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art* (translated by Janet Seligman from the 2nd German edition, 1969), Vol. 1 (London: Lund Humphries, 1971), 16–20, Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, Vol. 2, Part II (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1957), 129–140, and Englebert Kirschbaum ed., *Lexikon der Christ-lichen Ikonographie*, Vol. 4 (Rome: Herder, 1994), 550–558.

28. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'Arbre des Familles* (Paris: É ditions de la Martiniè re, 2003) 96.

29. Lepape suggests this may be due to a de-sexualisation of the image due to the debate over the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 185–187.

30. The number of doves varies, although usually the seven gifts are represented by seven doves, these are also sometimes identified by Latin inscriptions which can be translated as Knowledge, Wisdom, Piety, Understanding, Council, Fortitude and Fear of the Lord.

31. Jean Anne Hayes Williams, 'The Earliest Dated Tree of Jesse Image: Thematically Reconsidered', *Athanor*, Vol. XVIII (2000), 17, claims that depictions of the Tree of Jesse originated in Bohemia; however, this seems unlikely as an incipient version of a similar date exists in an Anglo-Norman manuscript. See Charles Reginald Dodwell, *The Pictorial Arts of the West, 800–1200* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 193–194. Furthermore, although there are striking parallels in oriental art, Watson believes that there is nothing to support a claim for an oriental source. See Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 58–76. However, an unfinished drawing in a Book of Kings, Rome Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (MS gr. 333), that may be the only survivor of a Greek genre of illustrated manuscripts of the Book of Kings, has been dated to c.1050–75 and may therefore predate the Vyšehrad Codex. See John Lowden, Kings, Books of, in the *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, Vol. 2, Alexander P. Kazhdan, ed. (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1129.

32. Ezekiel 44:1–2.

33. Numbers 17:8: 'He returned on the following day, and found that the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi, was budded: and that the buds swelling it had bloomed blossoms, which spreading the leaves, were formed into almonds' and Exodus 4:1–4,

> Moses answered and said: They will not believe me, nor hear my voice, but they will say: The Lord hath not appeared to thee. Then he said to him: What is that thou holdest in thy hand? He answered: A rod. And the Lord said: Cast it down upon the ground. He cast it down, and it was turned into a serpent: so that Moses fled from it. And the Lord said: Put out thy hand and take it by the tail. He put forth his hand, and took hold of it, and it was turned into a rod.

34. Some images also relate the Tree of Jesse to the flowering rod of Joseph; these are discussed in further detail in Chapter Six.

35. The late twelfth-century Ottobeuren Collectar (British Library, Yates Thompson 2, fol.107r) provides another example.

36. Daniel is miraculously delivered from the lion's den (Daniel 6:22), the Lord appears in a bush to Moses that was on fire but not burnt (Exodus 3:2), Gideon's fleece was covered in dew while the land remained dry (Judges 6:37), and Sidrach, Misach and Abdenago remained unharmed in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3:24).

37. The Tree of Jesse was a popular subject for Psalters, as King David is believed to have been the author of the majority of Psalms, and it can often be found decorating the first initial of the *beatus vir* at the beginning of Psalm One.

38. Schiller has suggested that this may be a reference to the tabernacle, the sanctuary of the Jews in the wilderness. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 21.

39. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 121–122.

40. Louis Grodecki, *Études sur les vitraux de Suger à Saint-Denis (XII siècle)*, CVMA, France III (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995).

41. Watson, 'Suger and the first Tree of Jesse', in *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 77–82.

42. See Emanda Richardson Johnson, *The Tree of Jesse in England and Northern France in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (MA Thesis: Meadows School of the Arts, Texas, 1993). This traces the way that the iconography found at Saint Denis was copied, modified and standardised over the following two centuries.

43. Revelation 22: *2*, 'In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits'.

44. Matthew 1:6–10:

> And Jesse begot David the king. And David the king begot Solomon, of her that had been the wife of Urias. And Solomon begot Roboam. And Roboam begot Abia. And Abia begot Asa. And Asa begot Josaphat. And Josaphat begot Joram. And Joram begot Ozias. And Ozias begot Joatham. And Joatham begot Achaz. And Achaz begot Ezechias. And Ezechias begot Manasses. And Manasses begot Amon. And Amon begot Josias.

45. Other early examples can also be found, such as the mural painting in the Buurkerk in

Utrecht (c.1453); the Breviary of Philip the Good (c.1455–59), Royal Library of Belgium, MS.9511, fol.15; and the Hours of Mary van Vronensteyn (c.1460), Royal Library of Belgium, MS.II. 7619, fol.18.

46. Revelation 12:1, 'And a great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars:' Some authors have also linked this form of representation with the text 'Fair as the moon, bright as the sun' from the Song of Solomon 6:9, which became associated with the Litanies of the Virgin and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. See Beth Williamson, *The Madonna of Humility: Development, Dissemination and Reception, c.1340–1400* (Woodbridge and Rochester: Boydell, 2009), 177.

47. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 52–54.

48. The story of the invention of the Holy Cross in the Golden Legend gives an account of how a shoot planted by Seth on the grave of Adam produced the tree from which the cross was made. For a further discussion of the relationship between the Tree of the Cross and the Tree of Jesse, see Barbara Baert, *A Heritage of Holy Wood: The Legend of the True Cross in Text and Image* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

49. Christopher Brook, *Churches and Churchmen in Medieval Europe* (London and Rio Grande: Hambledon Press, 1999), 235.

50. '*De virga Jesse devenimus ad virgam crucis, et principium redemptionis fine concludimus*', Peter Damian, *Homilia de exaltatione sanctae crucis* (Sermo XLVIII.I) in Jacques-Paul Migne, *S.Petri Damiani Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 144 (Paris: Excudebatur et venit apud Jacques-Paul Migne, 1853), col. 761.

51. Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages: A Study of Medieval Iconography and Its Sources* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), translated from the 1949 5th edition, 77–78 and 205. First discussed in *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 72–73 and 227.

52. D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*, 46–50.

53. Böcher, 'Zur Jüngeren Ikonographie der Wurzel Jesse', 153–168.

54. Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Nixon, *Mary's Mother* and Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne*.

55. Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe, Studien zu einem spätmittelalterlichen Bildthema in Deutschland und den Niederlanden* and Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*. Lepape discovered that in England the subject remained popular for Psalters, stained glass, wall painting and textiles throughout the fourteenth century, but that its use declined during the course of the fifteenth century, and that it had virtually ceased to be used by the early years of the sixteenth.

56. Luther did not endorse the iconoclastic riots and did not support the destruction of images. For Luther's position on religious images see David Englander et al., *Culture and Belief in Europe 1450–1600* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 69–71.

57. Phyllis Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544–1569* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 5–38.

1
The Tree of Jesse and the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*

The *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Mirror of human salvation) was one of the most widely disseminated and influential works of the late Middle Ages. Thought to have originated in the early fourteenth century, this text uses the medieval system of typo-logical representation to illustrate events from the story of salvation, many of which are drawn from the apocrypha. Following earlier precedents, the Tree of Jesse is used as a prefiguration for the Birth of the Virgin. The subject is therefore not only placed in a Marian context, but is also linked to the mother of the Virgin, Saint Anne, whose popularity reached a peak in northern Europe during the course of the fifteenth century.[1] The influence that these manuscripts and subsequent blockbooks had on late medieval iconographic programmes has long been recognised, although exactly how these texts might have acted as the agent for a shift in contemporary perceptions of the Tree of Jesse motif has not been previously considered. This chapter will discuss the *Speculum humanae salvationis* in some detail, to ascertain to what extent it might have encouraged and influenced renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography.

The earliest *Speculum* manuscripts are thought to have originated in Germany, sometime before 1324, the date recorded in the first known copies.[2] Even before 1450, the geographical dispersal of the manuscripts was extraordinary, reaching as far as Dortmund in the north, Prague in the east and Toledo in the south.[3] Originally in Latin, the earliest translation seems to have been into German, whilst the British Library has a Flemish copy dating from the early fifteenth century, known as the *De spieghel der menscheliker behoudenesse* (Add Ms. 11575), and the Haarlem Stadsbibliotheek has a copy in Dutch, the *Spieghel onser behoudenisse* (Ms. 11.17).[4] In 1448, Jean Miélot was commissioned by the Duke of Burgundy to translate the text into French; this edition was known as the *Miroir de la Salvation humaine*, and although the original manuscript is now lost, the draft, or minute, still survives in the Royal Library of Belgium (Ms. 9249–50).[5] Nearly four hundred manuscript copies from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mostly in Latin, but also in

German, Dutch, French, Czech and English, have been catalogued, providing convincing evidence of the *Speculum's* widespread appeal.[6]

In manuscripts, the *Speculum* usually occupies fifty-one leaves, one hundred and two pages. Although there is disagreement among scholars, it is believed that at least a third of all surviving examples are illustrated.[7] After a short prologue of two pages and prohemium of four, both without illustrations, there are forty-five chapters covering all the major events in the biblical story, starting with the Creation. The first two chapters describe the Fall of Lucifer and other important events taken from Genesis, and, consequently, have no Old Testament prefigurations. The final three chapters are of double length and are devoted to the Seven Stations of the Passion, the Seven Sorrows and the Seven Joys of the Virgin. Once again, their miniatures are not typological. The remaining forty chapters take an event from the story woven around the life of the Virgin or the scriptures and link it to three Old Testament episodes believed to have foreshadowed it. Although there are exceptions, traditionally these chapters follow a similar layout, with a double page opening containing four text columns, each of which is headed by a miniature pertaining to the text beneath. The first image represents the main event and the following three are typological. A whole chapter can therefore be read at one opening, the images visible concurrently across the top of the double page spread, as seen in the *Speculum* manuscript from the Einsiedeln Abbey Library of c.1430–50 (Codex 206 (49) fol.5v and 6r) (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1 *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Paris/Flanders, 1430–50

Einsiedeln, Stiftsbibliothek, Codex 206 (49) fols.5v and 6r (www.e-codices.ch)

The *Speculum*, according to its author, was a book for the instruction of both laymen and clerics, and a key theme throughout is its devotion to the Virgin. 'Those who instruct many men in righteousness will shine like stars forever. For this reason I decided to compile a book to teach many people, from which they can both receive and give instruction'.[8] Following the description of the Creation and Fall, the story of salvation begins in Chapter Three with the annunciation of the Birth of the Virgin. Prefigurations given for this event are King Astyages' dream of his daughter, from Comestor's *Historica scholastica*; a garden enclosing a sealed fountain, from the Song of Solomon; and Balaam's prophecy of the birth of Mary, from Numbers.[9] Astyages dreamt of a beautiful vine that grew out of his daughter, the vine had leaves and branches bearing fruit, which spread out over his entire kingdom. Following his dream, Astyages' daughter gave birth to a son, King Cyrus, who freed the children of Israel from the Babylonian Captivity. Therefore, just as Astyages is shown that his daughter will give birth to Cyrus, Joachim is shown that his daughter will bear Christ the King, and just as Cyrus liberated the Jews, Christ frees man from the bondage of Satan. Thus, the daughter of Astyages prefigures Mary and the annunciation of the Virgin's birth is the beginning of man's salvation. The dream of King Astyages, like the Tree of Jesse, represents the fulfilment of a genealogical prophecy and is the first indication of the manuscript's preoccupation with the ancestry of the Virgin.

Chapter Four discusses the actual birth and lineage of the Virgin, opening with Isaiah's prophecy. This was not the first time however that this had been directly linked to the Virgin's birth. At the beginning of the eleventh century, Fulbert of Chartres had composed an influential responsory for the Feast of the Birth of the Virgin known as the *Stirps Jesse*. This proclaimed 'The stem of Jesse brought forth a rod, and that rod a flower, And upon that flower rests God's blessing. The virgin and the mother is the rod, the flower her son'.[10] In her article relating to the celebration of the Nativity of Mary, Margot Fassler suggests that this association had its origins in the late eighth or ninth centuries, when Carolingian liturgists transformed the Feast by changing the Gospel text traditionally used in the Roman rite (the story of the Visitation recounted in Luke), to the genealogy of Christ recounted in Matthew.[11] This shift consequently placed an emphasis on lineage and implied that Mary herself was descended from David. It is unsurprising then that Isaiah's prophecy subsequently came to be more widely connected with the Virgin's birth, and there are some early examples where the Tree of Jesse was used to illustrate the lesson for the Feast, as in the thirteenth-century Gospel Lectionary from Sainte-Chapelle (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Latin

8892, fol.13v), where the motif decorates the first initial of the *Liber generationis* of Matthew 1.1.[12] This association continued to be popular and can be seen again in the illumination of the Nativity of the Virgin in the early fifteenth-century Lovell Lectionary (British Library, Harley 7026, fol.27) (Figure 1.2).

The idea that the Tree of Jesse foreshadowed the Virgin's birth was therefore established from an early date, yet the source for stories surrounding this event and the early life of the Virgin came not from the scriptures, but the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James, the Gospel of Pseudo Matthew and the *De Nativitate Mariae*.[13] These stories were further popularised from the thirteenth century onwards when the Italian Dominican, Jacobus de Voragine (d.1298), included them in his anthology of saints' lives known as the *Legenda aurea*, or Golden Legend.[14] This text became hugely influential in the following centuries. It appears to have been particularly popular in Germany and the Netherlands, where it was translated into the vernacular more often than anywhere else.[15] Voragine's narrative makes it clear that the Virgin was descended from the tribe of Judah and therefore the royal stock of David. This was important, because if Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus, who had been immaculately conceived, then to be in accordance with the prophecy of Isaiah, Christ's descent from David must be via Mary. Voragine goes on to explain that the Virgin's absence in the genealogies of the Gospels of both Matthew and Luke, which trace Christ's male descendants to Joseph, can be put down to Hebrew tradition, which dictated that only the male line was described.[16]

The miniature illustrating the Birth of the Virgin in the *Speculum* usually features Saint Anne, lying in bed with the newborn child, and the Virgin's father, Joachim, at her side (Figure 1.1). Alongside is the image of the Tree of Jesse, and beneath these

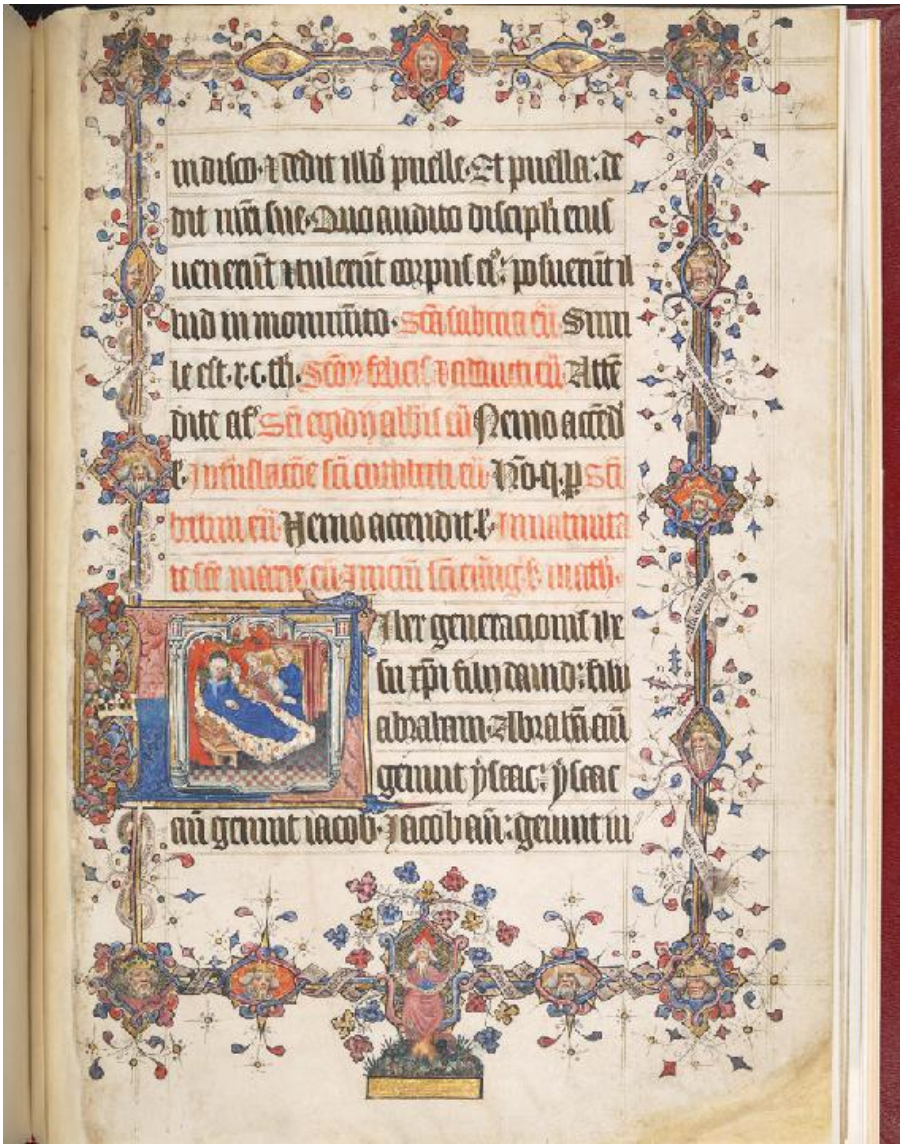


Figure 1.2 *Nativity of the Virgin*, Lovell Lectionary, 1403

©The British Library Board, Harley 7026, fol.27r

miniatures, the text asserts (as it does in the Golden Legend) that Mary was descended from David. The narrative then goes on to interpret Isaiah's prophecy, stating that the rod from the root of Jesse signifies Mary, who is made fruitful by heavenly dew, and produces for us Christ, the most beautiful flower (See Appendix 1). As discussed in the Introduction, this was not a new concept: the Virgin had often been assigned a preeminent position in Tree of Jesse iconography from as early as the twelfth century. However, the use of the

motif as a prefiguration for her birth in this manuscript shifts the emphasis from the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy to an affirmation of the Virgin's Davidic and royal paternity. The narrative then goes on to explain the second part of Isaiah's prophecy, that within the flower of Christ are found seven efficacious remedies for the various sicknesses of the soul, which correlate to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is not unusual, therefore, to find *Speculum* manuscript illuminations that feature seven doves on the branches of the tree.

In addition to the Tree of Jesse, the two other typological events used to illustrate the Birth of the Virgin are Ezekiel's vision of a closed gate and the Temple of Solomon.[17] Ezekiel's vision pertains to Mary's virginity, before and after the Birth of Christ. Mary is born to the line of Jesse, we are told, but how the flower blossomed is revealed in the image of the closed gate. The text also explains how the Temple of Solomon can mystically prefigure the Birth of the Virgin. The temple had three pinnacles, which signified Mary's celestial crown, the exterior was constructed of white marble and the interior was decorated with gold. Likewise, Mary radiates the dazzling splendour of the purest chastity and inwardly possesses the gold of the most precious charity. The association between the Tree of Jesse and Ezekiel's vision of a closed gate has a long tradition, and, as previously discussed, can be seen in one of the earliest known representation of the motif in the Vyšehrad Codex (Figure 0.1). The association with the Temple of Solomon, however, is much rarer.

The tree motif is used for a third time in Chapter Eight of the *Speculum* manuscript, which discusses the Birth of Christ. Here the text provides a mystical interpretation of the dream of the vine of Pharao's cup bearer (Genesis 40:1–23), Christ is the vine, but Mary is the earth from which he grows. Therefore, an analogous connection is made between the annunciation of the Virgin's birth, the birth itself, and the nativity of Christ. A fifteenth-century manuscript in the Morgan Library in New York takes this connection one step further by using the same tree type to illustrate all three events (Ms. M385, fols 5v, 6v and 10v).

When present, the miniatures act as a kind of mnemonic, reminding the reader of the content of each of the chapters. However, regardless of whether the *Speculum* manuscripts are illuminated or not, the use of Isaiah's prophecy as a prefiguration for the Birth of the Virgin can be seen as part of an overall desire to clear up any confusion regarding the genealogy of Christ, which may arise from the concept of the virgin birth. Consequently, Mary's crucial role in the story of salvation is highlighted, and it also places a new emphasis on the part played by her parents, particularly her mother, Saint Anne.

The figure of Saint Anne and the myth woven around the story of her life were extraordinarily popular in Germany and the Netherlands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Even Martin Luther commented on the

astonishing explosion of her cult:

> As I recall it the big event of Saint Anne's arrival happened when I was a boy of fifteen [1498]. Before that nobody knew anything about her; then a fellow came and brought Saint Anne. She caught on right away, and everybody was paying attention to her.[18]

Exactly how influential the *Speculum* manuscripts were in creating a connection between the Tree of Jesse motif, the genealogy of the Virgin and, by association, Saint Anne, can only be surmised. However, it does seem significant that this was one of the earliest books to be printed, appearing in the second half of the fifteenth century, shortly after the blockbook edition of another popular devotional text, the *Biblia pauperum*.[19] Not only did this mean that the *Speculum* was now able to reach a much wider audience than was ever possible in manuscript form, but also its illustrations became far more readily available as a source for artist's models.

It is generally agreed that the earliest blockbook editions of the *Speculum* were first produced somewhere in the Low Countries.[20] There appear to be four early editions: two in Latin and two in Dutch. The first Latin edition was produced in c.1468 and the first Dutch edition in c.1471.[21] These blockbooks are shorter than the completed manuscripts; they have no prologue, just the prohemium, and include only twenty-nine of the forty-five manuscript chapters. The first twenty-four chapters follow the same configuration as the manuscripts, with a woodcut containing two scenes and captions in Latin at the top of each page. Apart from a few exceptions, virtually all subsequent *Speculum* blockbooks followed the illustrations of the earliest prototypes. Therefore, although the images may differ in style from one edition to another, they are fairly consistent in their iconography. In all editions, as in the illuminated manuscripts, the Tree of Jesse appears in Chapter Four alongside the Birth of the Virgin, with the associated text appearing in two columns beneath, as can be seen in a Netherlandish blockbook in the British Library (shelfmark G.11784) (Figure 1.3). Opposite is the illustration of the closed gate of Ezekiel and the Temple of Solomon.

The same woodcuts were used throughout the four early editions, their shape and dimensions clearly indicating that they were always intended for use in a book format. Despite this, it seems that the illustration of the Tree of Jesse may have been instrumental in popularising a form of representation that became particularly commonplace across all media in the Netherlands in the second half of the fifteenth century. Jesse appears asleep on a gothic chair in a garden; he is bearded and rests his bare head in his left hand. The shoot rising from his chest divides into branches, which have leaves and flowers and, in the corolla of the flowers, sit the heads of twelve kings. Directly above Jesse, sitting on one of the branches, is the Virgin, who is both crowned and haloed.

She is holding the naked Christ Child on her lap with her left hand and has a round object, perhaps a reference to the apple of Eve, in her right. Christ, who also has a halo, raises his right hand in a gesture of benediction. Cut into the block beneath this scene are the words of Isaiah's prophecy '*egredietur virga de radice Jesse*'.

Émile Mâle's suggestion that Jesse appeared seated for the first time in the *Speculum* is incorrect, as many manuscript illustrations of seated Jesses can be identified before this date.[22] Arthur Watson, for example, gives several instances of a seated Jesse, dating from one of the first known representation of the motif in the Vyšehrad Codex.[23] A precedent for kings depicted as half figures in blossoms on the tree can be seen in the Parisian *Bible Historiale* of c.1414–15 (Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 9002, fol.223r) (Figure 0.8), and both elements can be found together in a large Latin manuscript containing the *Catholicon* by Johannes Balbus of Janua, inscribed with the date '25 January 1457' (Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 102–03, fol.57)

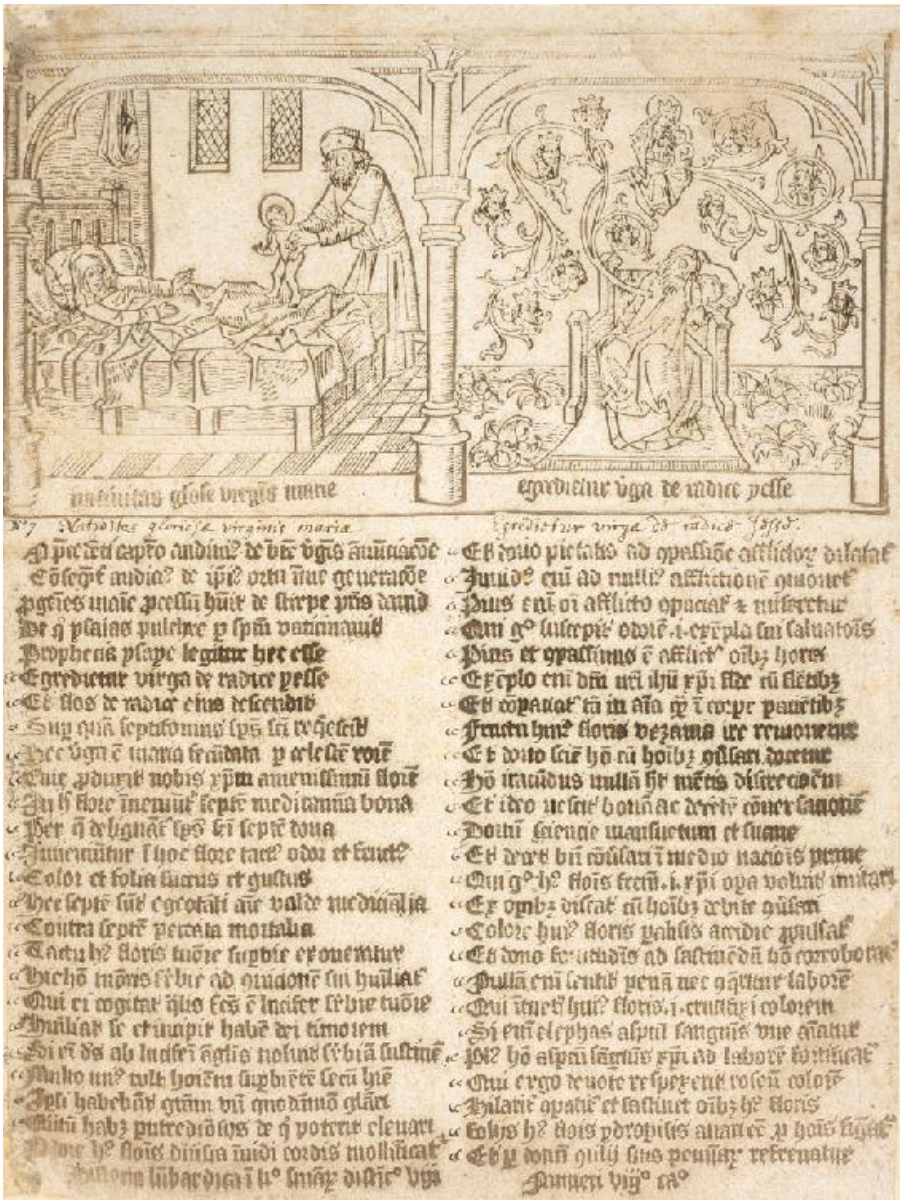


Figure 1.3 *Birth of the Virgin* and *Tree of Jesse*, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Netherlandish Blockbook, c.1473–75

©The British Library Board, G.11784

(Figure 6.2).[24] Nevertheless, it does seem likely that the widespread distribution of *Speculum* texts from the 1470s would have had an impact on future forms of Tree of Jesse representation.

Following the early blockbooks, no fewer than sixteen incunabulum editions of the *Speculum*, by eleven different printers, were issued before the end of the

fifteenth century.[25] Printed in Latin, Dutch, French and German, all had woodcut illustrations, ensuring that the Tree of Jesse motif increasingly came to be associated with the genealogy of the Virgin and Saint Anne. The first of the *Speculum* texts to be printed with new woodcuts came from the press of Günther Zainer of Augsburg in 1473.[26] This was followed in 1476 by a German translation, the *Spiegel menschlicher Behältnis*, printed by Bernhard Richel in Basel, which also had a new set of vertical woodcuts, partially derived from Zainer's blocks. The design of these German woodcuts differs to a certain extent from the earlier blockbooks; in both Jesse is shown recumbent on a bed and is crowned, even though he is not a king, and the Virgin is shown without the Christ Child, perhaps implying that she alone can also been seen as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. Although there is no intrinsic significance in the position of Jesse, it may be relevant that in German works of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries it is more usual to find a recumbent Jesse, in common with the woodcuts published by Zainer and Richel.

The use of the Tree of Jesse as a prefiguration of the Birth of the Virgin can also be found in an edition of the *Biblia pauperum*. Usually this text has forty pages, and its illustrations, which depict events and their prefigurations from the Life of Christ, do not feature the Tree of Jesse motif. In c.1480–85, however, a fifty page edition was produced. This was fundamentally an extension of the forty page edition which incorporated ten new subjects, including the Birth of the Virgin.[27] The Tree of Jesse appears with Balaam's prophecy, flanking the depiction of the birth (Figure 1.4). Unfortunately, only one copy of this blockbook still survives (in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris) and we have no way of knowing how many copies were originally printed, or if any other editions were ever produced. Nevertheless, its existence provides further evidence that, by the end of the fifteenth century, the Tree of Jesse motif had become irrevocably linked with the Virgin's early life and genealogy.

Although there are connected texts and captions in Latin, the *Biblia pauperum* is essentially a picture book, and it is through the relationship between the pictures on each page that the reader understands the intended meaning. The Birth of the Virgin is the subject of the first page of the extended edition, implying that the Bible story starts with this event. The Tree of Jesse appears to the left of the illustration of the Birth at the centre of the page, with associated texts relating to Isaiah's prophecy. The titulus or caption under the image of the Birth of the Virgin reads, '*Sicut spina rosam genuit iudea Mariam'*, which can be translated as 'Just as the Judean thorn begat the rose Mary', and that beneath the Tree of Jesse reads, '*Sic de radice processit virgula Yesse'*, 'A rod comes thus from the root of Jesse'. A banderole that appears within the illustration carries the prophecy of Isaiah, '*egredietur virga de radice Jesse'*, and the lectione or text at the top of the page tells us that, as it is

says in Isaiah 11, the Virgin is born from the root of Jesse. Meanwhile, the prophet scrolls appear to refer to texts in the Song of Solomon 6.9 and Genesis 6.14.[28] The titulus under Balaam's prophecy, to the right of the Birth of the Virgin, reads '*Ex Jacob ista processit stellula clara*', 'From Jacob came that bright little star'. The purpose of the Tree of Jesse illustration in the *Biblia pauperum* is identical to its function in the *Speculum;* it endorses the Davidic

Figure 1.4 *Birth of the Virgin*, Fifty-Page *Biblia pauperum* Blockbook, 1480–85

ancestry of the Virgin, thereby highlighting her role in the story of salvation, and it draws attention to her mother, Saint Anne.

Iconographic similarities between the *Speculum* and works of art in all media have been identified by several scholars. For example, in 1905 Mâle cited several instances where he believed prominent Netherlandish artists, such as Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, were inspired by both the *Speculum* and *Biblia pauperum*.[29] In 1929, Jean Lafond discovered that a sixteenth-century Book of Hours from Rouen used for its illuminations a typological format taken directly from the *Speculum*.[30] More direct evidence that this text influenced the use of Tree of Jesse iconography is provided by three large fourteenth-century windows, now preserved in the Temple Saint-Étienne at Mulhouse.[31] These windows present a slightly modified version of the *Speculum* design, as each register features at its centre an episode from the life of the Virgin or scriptures, with an Old Testament prefiguration on either side. In the fourth register of the first window of the series we can see a depiction of the Birth of the Virgin, flanked by a representation of Ezekiel's vision of the closed gate to its left, and a Tree of Jesse to its right.[32]

Conclusion

It seems that although Tree of Jesse iconography was associated with the Virgin from an early date, its use in the *Speculum humanae salvationis* manuscripts and subsequent blockbooks encouraged and influenced a renewed interest in the motif in certain parts of northern Europe. Its use as a prefiguration for the Birth of the Virgin was linked to a growing interest in her early life and genealogy, and its function was to establish her Davidic ancestry. This also cleared up any confusion regarding the genealogy of Christ that may have arisen from the Gospels. Although the composition of the woodcut design may not have originated with the first edition of the *Speculum* blockbooks, there can be little doubt that the widespread distribution of these books meant that they became a valuable source of reference, providing inspiration for donors and artists alike, contributing to the visual vocabulary of the later medieval period. The *Speculum* highlighted Mary's crucial role in the story of salvation and also placed a new emphasis on the part played by her mother. It is unsurprising therefore that the Tree of Jesse also came to be used to endorse the royal paternity of Saint Anne, whose cult was to flourish from the second half of the fifteenth century.

Notes

1. Devotion to Saint Anne in the West had been almost unknown until the second half of the fourteenth century. See Henry Marriott Bannister, 'The Introduction of the Cultus of Saint Anne into the West', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 18, No. 69 (January 1903), 107–112.

2. References within the text have indicated a Dominican author of south-west German or Swabian origin. An Italian source in the university town of Bologna has also been suggested, although this need not necessarily imply Italian authorship and there is no particular tradition for the work in Italy. For a full discussion of the authorship and early distribution of these manuscripts see Jules Lutz and Paul Perdrizet, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis, Texte critique, Traduction inédite de Jean Mielot (1448), Les sources et l'influence iconographique*, Tome 1 (Mulhouse: Meininger, 1907); Adrian Wilson and Joyce Lancaster Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror, Speculum Humanae Salvationis, 1324–1500* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1984), 26–27; Bert Cardon, *Manuscripts of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis in the Southern Netherlands (c.1410–1470)* (Leuven: Peeters, 1996), 40–42, and Evelyn Silber, 'The Reconstructed Toledo *Speculum humanae salvationis*: The Italian Connection in the Early Fourteenth Century', *The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. XLIII (1980), 32–51.

3. Avril Henry, *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun, A Middle English Translation of Speculum Humanae Salvationis: A Critical Edition of the Fifteenth-Century Manuscript Illustrated From Der Spiegel der menschen Behältnis, Speyer, Drach, c.1475* (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1986), 10.

4. These manuscripts are discussed in further detail by Wilson and Wilson in *A Medieval Mirror*, 87–88.

5. Other French translations can be found in the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow (Ms. 60), the Newberry Library in Chicago (Ms. 40), the Musée Condé in Chantilly (Ms. fr.139, which carries the arms of the Flemish Le Fèvre family) and at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris (Ms. fr.188, commissioned by Louis of Bruges for his library at Gruthuyse). Bert Cardon looked at the function and meaning of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* at the Burgundian court between 1450 and 1470, and concluded that the manuscript was especially important in court circles. Cardon, *Manuscripts of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, 322–350.

6. Lutz and Perdrizet catalogued two hundred and forty-seven manuscripts, written in both Latin and the vernacular, and mentioned a further twenty-five in an appendix. See *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, Tome 1. Edgar Breitenbach supplemented and amended Lutz and Perdrizet's catalogue, adding a further seventy-nine entries, in *Speculum humanae salvationis: eine typengeschichtliche untersuchung* (Strassburg: J. H. E. Heitz, 1930). Evelyn Silber in her unpublished dissertation, *The Early Iconography of the Speculum Humanae Salvationis: The Italian Connection in the Fourteenth Century* (PhD Diss: Cambridge University, 1982), provides a list of three hundred and ninety-four surviving manuscripts.

7. Wilson and Wilson in *A Medieval Mirror*, 10, claim that nearly all the manuscripts are illuminated, whilst Silber in The Reconstructed Toledo *Speculum humanae salvationis*, 32, claims that approximately only one third are illuminated. Of the two hundred and forty-seven manuscripts catalogued by Lutz and Perdrizet, 39% were specified as having some

form of illustration, 26% had none at all and 35% were not described in any detail.

8. Translation from the prologue taken from Henry, *The Mirour of Mans Saluacioun*, 227.

9. Song of Solomon 4:12 '*Hortus conclusus soror mea, sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus*', 'My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up'. Numbers 24:17 '*Orietur stella ex Jacob, et consurget virga de Israel:*' 'A star shall rise out of Jacob and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel'. The text of the Golden Legend describes the angel's annunciation of the Birth of the Virgin, first to Joachim and then to Anne. The text of the *Speculum* refers only to the annunciation to Joachim and, therefore, most manuscript and blockbook copies depict this event. However, there are some examples where the annunciation to Anne is shown instead, these include Brussels, Royal Library, Ms. 9332–9345, fol. 124v (1428), Paris, BnF, Ms. Latin 512, fol. 4v (1401–1500) and Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Ms. 23, fol. 4 (c.1460). See Bert Cardon, 'Between Flanders and France? The Speculum Humanae Salvationis, Fitzwilliam Museum Ms 23 (c.1460)', in *Fifteenth-Century Flemish Manuscripts in Cambridge Collections* (Cambridge: Cambridge Bibliographical Society, 1992), 165–172.

10. '*Stirps Jesse virgam produxit, virgaque florem, Et super hunc florem requiescit spiritus almus. V. Virgo dei genitrix virga est, flos filius eius*'. See Margot E. Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres and the Stirps Jesse: Liturgical Innovation circa 1000 and Its Afterlife', *Speculum*, Vol. 75 (April 2000), 418.

11. Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres and the Stirps Jesse', 389–434. The Feast of Mary's Nativity was celebrated on the 8th September.

12. A second Tree of Jesse appears on fol.16 of this manuscript, decorating the first initial of the *Liber generationis* for the Matins reading on Christmas Day, thereby linking the two feasts. See Robert Branner, 'Le Premier Evangéliaire de la Sainte-Chapelle', *Revue de l'Art*, Vol. 3 (1969), 37–48.

13. The Protoevangelium of James is likely to have originated in the second century and was widespread in the East, whilst it was not until the sixth or seventh century that the Gospel of Pseudo Matthew popularised the same stories in the West. The *De Nativitate Mariae* probably dates from the ninth century; chapters one through eight are a free adaptation of the Pseudo Matthew, whilst chapters nine through ten follow the canonical Gospels of Mathew and Luke. For further details see James Keith Elliott, 'Mary in the Apocryphal New Testament', in Chris Maunder ed., *The Origins of the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London and New York: Burns and Oates, 2008), 57–70. Fassler suggests that belief in the idea that the evangelist Matthew wrote texts about the Virgin and that her life was directly and deliberately supported by the change in Gospel text for the Feast of Mary's Nativity. She suggests therefore that liturgy, theology and exegesis worked together to give the Virgin's life story legitimacy. See Fassler, 'Mary's Nativity, Fulbert of Chartres and the Stirps Jesse', 397–398.

14. Jacobus de Voragine, 'The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary', in *The Golden Legend, Readings on the Saints* (translated by William Granger Ryan), Vol. II (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1993), 149–158.

15. See Werner Williams-Krapp, 'German and Dutch Translations of the Legenda Aurea', in Brenda Dunn-Lardeau ed., *Legenda Aurea: Sept Siècles de Diffusion*, Actes du colloque international sur la Legenda aurea: texte Latin et branches vernaculaires à l'Université du Québec à Montréal, May, 1983, 227–232.

16. Voragine explains that Christ was born of the Virgin alone and that the Virgin herself was

born of David through the line of Nathan, the ancestor of her father Joachim, whilst Joseph was born of David through the line of his other son, Solomon. Joseph was by birth the son of Jacob of the line of Solomon, but by law the son of Heli, of the line of Nathan, the deceased first husband of his mother. Voragine, *The Golden Legend, Reading on the Saints* (translated by Granger Ryan), Vol. II, 149. This does not entirely clear up the confusion created by the differing genealogies described in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke.

17. Ezekiel 44:2 'And the Lord said to me: This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it: because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut'. 3 Kings 6: 'And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of the reign of Solomon over Israel, in the month Zio (the same is the second month), he began to build a house to the Lord….'

18. Martin Luther, '*Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe'*, Vol. 47, (Weimar: H. Bohlau, 1883–1948), 383, *'Bej meinem gedencken ist das gross wesen von S.Anna auffkomen, als ich ein knabe von funffzehen jharen wahr. Zuvor wuste man nichts von ihr, sondern ein bube kam und brachte S.Anna, klugs gehet sie ahn, den es gab jederman darzu'*. Translation by Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 38.

19. Cornelia Schneider and Sabine Mertens eds., *Blockbücher des Mittelalters, Bilderfolgen als Lektüre*, Gutenberg-Museum, Exh. Cat. (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1991), provides a catalogue of forty-five *Speculum* blockbooks, however, survival records can be misleading, as they do not directly reflect the original number of copies or their market.

20. Approximately thirty-six different texts and picture texts were printed in blockbook editions in the fifteenth century, and almost all of these came from the Low Countries or from southern Germany. See Paul Needham, 'Prints in the Early Printing Shops', in Peter Parshall ed., *The Woodcut in Fifteenth-Century Europe* (Washington, DC and New Haven: National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press, 2005), 46.

21. The second Latin edition was produced in c.1474 and the second Dutch edition in c.1479. Wilson and Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror*, 116. See also Arthur Hind, *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut, With a Detailed Survey of Work Done in the Fifteenth Century* (London: Constable and Company Ltd, 1935), 247, who places the *Speculum* blockbooks in Holland about 1470–75.

22. Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 77–78.

23. Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 47–48, and 'The Speculum Virginum With Special Reference to the Tree of Jesse', *Speculum*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (October 1928), 445–469.

24. The origin of this type of representation is discussed further in Chapter Six.

25. These are discussed in greater detail by Wilson and Wilson, *A Medieval Mirror*, 207–215.

26. Needham, 'Prints in the Early Printing Shops', 41.

27. This text can be consulted online at http://gallica.bnf.fr. See also Wilhelm Ludwig Schreiber and Paul Heitz, *Biblia pauperum, nach dem einzigen Exemplare in 50 Darstellungen* (Strassburg: Heitz and Mündel, 1903). Apart from some new inscriptions or updating of clothing, there appears to have been few other changes made to the iconography of the original forty subjects.

28. Song of Solomon: 6.9 'Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the

moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army set in array? Genesis 6.14: 'Make thee an ark of timber planks: thou shalt make little rooms in the ark, and thou shalt pitch it within and without'.

29. Émile Mâle, 'L'art symbolique â la fin du moyen-âge', *Revue de l'art ancient et moderne*, Vol. XVIII (September 1905), 195–209. This assertion was repeated in his *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen-âge en France* and subsequent editions. See Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 219–230.

30. Jean Lafond, *Un Livre d'Heures Rouennias, Enluminé d'Après Le Speculum Humanae Salvationis* (Rouen: Imprimerie A. Laine, 1929). See also Robert Koch, 'The Sculptures of the Church of Saint-Maurice at Vienne, the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (June 1950), 151–155.

31. This was first identified by Lutz and Perdrizet, who also recognised links between the icono-graphic programme of the *Speculum* and typological glass in Alsace, at Wissembourg, Colmar and Rouffach. See *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, 307–308.

32. For a more detailed description of this windows see Michel Hérold and Françoise Gatouillat eds., *Lorraine et Alsace*, CVMA, France 5 (Paris: Éditions du Centre national de la Recherche scientifique, 1994), 294.

2
The Tree of Jesse and Saint Anne

Saint Anne became a figure of great authority in parts of northern Europe in the late medieval period.[1] In addition to the emphasis placed on her as the mother of the Virgin in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, devotion was also promoted by a series of Lives, which were particularly prevalent in the Netherlands and Germany.[2] These texts popularised and propagated the legend of the saint's three marriages, first recounted in the apocrypha. Sometimes referred to as the *Trinubium*, this myth was often illustrated by an image known as the Holy Kinship.[3] This chapter will consider how the preoccupation with the cult of Saint Anne and her legend may have also contributed to the renewed interest in the Tree of Jesse motif. It will argue that the Tree of Jesse, an already well established visual metaphor for the genealogy of Christ and the Virgin, was appropriated to imply a specific role in the story of salvation for Saint Anne, who was consciously promoted by many humanist scholars as an appropriate role model for women to emulate. Many of the devotional objects examined in this chapter are rarely discussed in the art-historical literature, yet when considered together they demonstrate how there was a development in imagery, and how a conflation of the themes of the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship at the end of the fifteenth century, led to fully developed and cohesive representations in the early sixteenth. It will then be argued that once these images became established, they were abridged or adapted to reflect the particular concerns of individual patrons, although they still remained a visual signifier for the larger iconography. Furthermore, it will be suggested that some of these works may have had a commemorative function, linking ideas of holy and earthly lineage. A clear picture emerges of an iconography that was dynamic and current, reflecting both the theological and more rudimentary preoccupations of the day.

It has been proposed by several scholars that a belief that the conception of the Virgin was divinely ordained and without sin was instrumental in the choice and form of Tree of Jesse iconography from the mid-fifteenth century.[4] The second part of this chapter will address this premise, arguing that although support for belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was important,

it had in fact a secondary connection with the Tree of Jesse. This is highly significant, as without context, many of these images can be easily misunderstood.

Saint Anne and the Legend of the *Trinubium*

The legend of the *Trinubium* had its origins in early Christianity. Therefore, to fully understand how it influenced Tree of Jesse iconography, it is first necessary to examine its history. Belief in the perpetual virginity of the Virgin was a doctrine of the church from the early councils, yet this was contradicted by the many references in the New Testament to Christ's brethren or brothers, and inevitably there was a great deal of discussion regarding the exact nature of the relationship between these biblical characters and Christ.[5] The Protoevangelium of James, thought to have originated in the second century, had explained that the brethren were in fact children of Joseph from a previous marriage.[6] In the fourth century the biblical commentator Helvidius suggested that Mary herself may have had more children with Joseph, and that these brethren were in fact younger half-brothers of Christ.[7] Saint Jerome vigorously attacked this suggestion in his *De perpetua virginitate B Mariae*, where he not only defended the continued virginity of Mary, but claimed that Joseph had also retained his virginity.[8] He explained that the brothers or brethren mentioned in the New Testament were actually cousins of Christ, a confusion which he believed arose from a misunderstanding of the original Hebrew. Jerome's argument is based on the Gospel accounts of Christ's death and burial by Matthew and Mark, who both maintain that a woman called Mary, who was the mother of James the Less and Joseph, was present along with Mary Magdalene and a third woman.[9] Because James was referred to as the Lord's brother by Saint Paul in Galatians, Helvidius had proposed that the Mary named by Matthew and Mark in the two passages was in fact the Virgin.[10] Jerome argued however, that this Mary was in fact the Mary described by John as Mary of Clopas (Cleophas) in his description of the Crucifixion.[11] He believed, therefore, that the only possible explanation was that the Mary described by John as Mary of Cleophas was also the mother of James and Joseph and, consequently, the sister of the Virgin. Furthermore, Jerome proposed that because James was referred to as the son of Alpheus, by both Mathew and Mark, it was likely that Mary Cleophas was the wife of Alpheus and the daughter of Cleophas.[12] Simon and Jude were also added to

the Mary Cleophas branch of the family at a later date, following the references to James, Joseph, Jude and Simon, as Christ's brethren in both Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3.

By the ninth century, another sister, Mary Salome, had been added to the Virgin's family tree.[13] The third woman, who is referred to in the accounts of Christ's death alongside Mary Magdalene and Mary Cleophas, is described by Matthew as the mother of the sons of Zebedee, while Mark calls her Salome, who is again identified by Mark as present at Christ's tomb.[14] The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all identify the apostles James and John as the sons of Zebedee, and Matthew describes them further as the brethren of Christ.[15] If James and John are the sons of Zebedee and brethren of Christ, following Jerome's argument, they must also be cousins of Christ and their mother, Salome, the wife of Zebedee, a second sister to the Virgin.

Saint Jerome, however, had made no mention of Saint Anne, the apocryphal mother of the Virgin, and therefore the precise nature of the relationship between the three sisters was still unclear. The first known expression of the *Trinubium* hypothesis has been attributed to the ninth-century Benedictine bishop, Haymo of Auxerre. In Book Two of his *Epitome historiae sacrae*, he proposed the theory that Saint Anne must have been married three times and had a daughter by each of her three husbands, all called Mary.[16] This legend subsequently appeared in the second half of the eleventh century in a new version of the Pseudo-Matthew, and in the twelfth century was further disseminated by Peter Lombard's Commentary on Galatians and Peter Comestor's summary of Bible history, the *Historia Scholastica*, both of which were widely known. Furthermore, diagrams outlining the *Trinubium* appeared in the late twelfth-century *Compendium Historiae in Genealgia Christi*, by Peter of Poitiers.[17]

Despite its rejection by Thomas Aquinas, the story of Saint Anne's three marriages was further popularised in the thirteenth century by Jacobus de Voragine's Golden Legend.[18] In his chapter relating to the Birth of the Virgin, Voragine recounts how, after the death of her first husband, Joachim, Anne took a second husband, Cleophas. This marriage produced a second daughter, who was also named Mary and who was subsequently married to Alpheus. Mary Cleophas bore her husband four sons: James the Less, Joseph the Just, Simon and Jude. After the death of her second husband, Anne took a third, Salome, with whom she had a third daughter, again named Mary. Mary Salome married Zebedee and had two sons, namely James the Greater and John the Evangelist. Therefore, five of Christ's cousins were also apostles; only Joseph the Just was excluded from this elite group.

The Golden Legend also includes the story of Saint Anne's sister Hismeria, also known as Esmeria or Emeria, who was the mother of Elizabeth and Eliud,

the Virgin's cousins.[19] Elizabeth became the mother of John the Baptist and Eliud the father of Eminen, from whose line came Saint Servatius. Saint Servatius was the fourth-century bishop of Tongeren and archbishop of Maastricht and, as such, was particularly venerated in Germany and the Netherlands.[20] This less well known branch of the Holy Kinship emerged from the eleventh century onwards, independently from the legend of the *Trinubium*.[21] It appears in the earliest accounts of Saint Servatius' life, and although it does not feature in the Protoevangelium of Saint James, the works of Peter Lombard or Peter Comestor, Hismeria can be found in Peter of Poiters' Compendium. Saint Servatius and his forebears, along with the parents of Saint Anne, known as Emerentiana and Stollanus, were often incorporated in Tree of Jesse iconography, particularly with that associated with the Carmelite Order; this will be discussed further in the following chapter.

The earliest known images to feature Saint Anne and her extended family appear to have been English, and have been discussed in some detail by Mellie Naydenova-Slade.[22] It appears that the subject of Holy Kinship was of particular interest to the English from as early as the twelfth century, with depictions in monumental art evenly spread throughout the following century.[23] However, it was in Germany and the Netherlands in the late fifteenth, and more particularly in the early sixteenth century, that devotion to Saint Anne and the Holy Kinship reached its zenith. In Werner Esser's study of Holy Kinship iconography in this area, approximately three quarters of his examples come from the period 1500–50.[24]

Studies of the late fifteenth-century flowering of the cult of Saint Anne in Germany and the Netherlands have all connected the phenomenum with the contemporaneous publication of new Lives of Saint Anne by both Rhineland and Netherlandish authors. These texts give a full account of Anne's life, followed by prayers and miracle stories relating to how she helped those who honoured her or, alternatively, punished those who did not. The Lives begin with Anne's parents, Emerentiana and Stollanus, and mention her sister Hismeria. They tell the story of the saint's birth, marriage to Joachim, and the birth of Mary; this is then followed by the legend of her following marriages, Mary's marriage to Joseph, and the Birth of Christ. As Ton Brandenbarg has shown, the popularity of these Lives was extraordinary. He has traced at least ten different versions, both in Latin and the vernacular, with a clear peak in publication around 1500, at approximately the same time that we see the appearance of new forms of Tree of Jesse iconography.[25]

It seems that veneration of Saint Anne during this period was also being promoted to a large extent by the writings of northern humanists.[26] Among others, Rudolf Agricola, the founding father of humanism in the Netherlands, wrote a poem dedicated to the saint in 1483–85, and one of the earliest

humanists, the Augustinian canon Cornelius Aurelius, began his 1490s epos, *Marias*, with a Life of Saint Anne; even Erasmus wrote a poem dedicated to the saint. As discussed earlier, the myth woven around the life of the saint addressed many of the disparities in the biblical narrative, yet these northern humanists may have also been motivated by more worldly objectives. In the later Middle Ages, the Low Countries and southern Germany experienced prosperity and cultural renewal, fuelled by the growth of the cloth industry and long-distance trade.[27] These areas became some of the most densely populated regions of Europe, and with this came increased urbanisation and the growth of a wealthy merchant class. Social networks, craft guilds and kinship ties were an important element of this urban society, and humanists may have seen in Saint Anne and the Holy Kinship a suitable exemplar, one that could be promoted to encourage not only spiritual, but also moral discipline.

Furthermore, northern humanists were becoming increasingly critical of the belief that the celibate life was a superior one, and Saint Anne and her family could be used to advocate the benefits of marriage and motherhood.[28] Not only did Saint Anne's position as a devoted grandmother and mother mark her out from other female saints, but she was often depicted with a book, or teaching the young Virgin to read. Although humanists still endorsed the social, political and economic dominance of men, their ideology supported the education of women.[29] Northern humanists believed that having children and educating them properly should be the vocation of every woman. This emphasis on the family coincided with a lay desire for a more personal religious experience, and in Saint Anne the pious housewife found a saint whom she could relate to, one who could be an intercessor for all things to do with the family.[30] Not only could Saint Anne be promoted as a positive role model for female behaviour, young or old, but also she could be seen to be acting in the interests of men, who required the legitimate procreation of children to maintain and strengthen dynastic interests. As Brandenbarg has identified, Saint Anne became the protector of mothers, pregnant women and those longing to become mothers, and, at the same time, was venerated as the champion of marriage, family and widows.[31] In addition, because of the miracles ascribed to her, Saint Anne also became the patron saint of many merchant guilds, and consequently became equally revered by both men and women, particularly those of the urban middle class.

Saint Anne and the legend of her extended family came to be associated with the Tree of Jesse from an early date. English examples from the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries can be found in the Imola Psalter (Imola Biblioteca Comunale, Ms100 fol.10v and fol.11r) and the Queen Mary Psalter (British Library, Ms Royal 2B vii, fol. 67v and fol. 68r), both of which place the

female genealogy of Christ juxtaposed with the Tree of Jesse on facing or consecutive pages. The image in the Imola Psalter not only features all three of Saint Anne's daughters, as well as their children, but also her sister Hismeria's progeny. Both matriarchs are placed conventionally at the top of the page, with their descendants arranged beneath them in a roundel-based format following the top-down orientation of secular genealogical charts. The female genealogy in the Queen Mary Psalter, although not a tree format, more closely follows the Tree of Jesse structure, with the three marriages of Saint Anne featured in the bottom register, and Christ and the five apostles in the top two registers. This bottom up orientation means that it is read in the same direction as the Tree of Jesse, which, as Anne Rudloff Stanton has pointed out, accords Saint Anne a similar status to that of Jesse, thereby underlining the importance of the female ancestors of Christ.[32] Jesse provides the ancestors of Christ to the end of the Old Testament period, whilst Saint Anne provides the ancestors of Christ for the New Testament period. This visual reorientation of the female genealogy of Christ and its early association with the Tree of Jesse is significant, and establishes that there was a precedent for the subsequent conflation of ideas in later representations of the subject by Netherlandish and German artists.

Figure 2.1 *Holy Kinship* and *Tree of Jesse*, Sandstone Relief, c.1458

(Size: 142 × 192 × 26 cm) Museum Kloster Bentlage, Rheine, Germany (Photo: Stephan Kube)

Although there may have been earlier instances which are now lost, one of the first known examples to actually combine the Tree of Jesse with the Holy Kinship in a single image can be found on a polychromed sandstone relief from Westphalia in western Germany (Figure 2.1).[33] Executed in c.1458 for the monastery of the Knights of the Cross in Rheine- Bentlage, it features the women of the Holy Kinship and their children seated on a long bench. Mary is crowned, while the other female figures have halos, indicating their saintly status. Half figures of their husbands, hatted and holding scrolls, stand behind them, separated from the women and their children by the high back of the bench. This differentiation between the adult male and female members of the Holy Kinship seems to imply that the women were considered more sacred than their husbands, marginalising the role of fathers in the narrative of Christ's family. This has been seen by Elizabeth L'Estrange as appearing to privilege the social roles of late medieval lay women, despite their inferior status.[34] Jesse lies asleep at the base of the relief and busts of the forbearers of Christ, in tendrils of the tree, act as a frame.[35] From the visual connection made in the *Speculum* manuscripts between Saint Anne and the Old Testament genealogy of Christ, this new iconography implies that His extended matrilineal family is also encompassed by Isaiah's prophecy, conferring on the group not only a holy, but also a quasi-royal status.

Figure 2.2 *Holy Kinship* and *Tree of Jesse*, Tapestry, 1501

(Size: 175 × 404 cm) Mainz, Bischöfliches Dom- und Diözesanmuseum (Photo: d' Art Speltdoorn & fils, Brüssel)

Other larger works provide a much more explicit example of this conflation of themes, as can be seen in a tapestry now in the Cathedral Museum in Mainz (Figure 2.2). Even though the provenance of tapestries can often be uncertain, visual evidence suggests that this work was commissioned by a patron from the middle Rhineland and may have a commemorative function.[36] Once again,

the tapestry features the holy women sitting on a long bench; lying in front of the bench is Jesse, who is identified by the inscription, '*JESSE. PATER DAVID*'. The tree that comes from Jesse's chest forms the border of the tapestry and, sitting in blossoms within the tendrils of the tree identified by inscriptions, are the busts of fifteen kings.[37] The women on the bench have halos and are also identified by inscriptions, except for the Virgin, who sits in the centre with the Christ Child on her lap. Immediately to the left of the Virgin is Saint Anne, and next to her are Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome with their offspring. To the right of the Virgin is Saint Elizabeth with John the Baptist on her lap. Next to her are her mother Hismeria and Hismeria's granddaughter-in-law, Memelia, mother of Saint Servatius, with the young saint on her lap. Behind the bench stand the three husbands of Saint Anne, along with the husbands of the other women depicted, also identified by inscriptions. A further inscription in Latin, on the unfurled banner above the bench, tells the story of the *Trinubium*. The representation of Jesse in this tapestry is rather unusual, traditionally depicted as an old man asleep, he appears here as a much younger man arranged in a conventional funerary pose, which may support the idea that the work had a commemorative function. The contemporary dress of some of the female figures may also endorse this hypothesis, creating a visual link between Jesse and the Holy Kinship, and the family of the donor. At over four metres long, it is unlikely that the tapestry was used as an antependium, and it probably functioned as a wall hanging, perhaps only displayed on special feast days, which would have given it a liturgical as well as commemorative function.[38]

This type of iconography, where the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship co-exist in a single image, clearly reflects a growing interest in Saint Anne and her extended family, yet the Tree of Jesse itself is still being used to describe the royal forefathers of Christ. In some cases, however, the iconography of Jesse and the tree has been completely subsumed, with the figure of Jesse actually substituted with that of Saint Anne.[39] Saint Anne is now seen and understood as the root, the *radice* of Isaiah's prophecy from which the *virga* grows. Examples of this new iconography survive in several different media. Esser, who classifies them as *Arbor Annae*, makes the observation that in almost all cases, the format for the imagery is modelled on the composition of the seated Jesse that became popular from the mid-fifteenth century.[40] An early example of an *Arbor Annae* can be found on a print by the Netherlandish engraver, Master W with Key, dated c.1480 and now in the British Museum (Reg no. 1858,0417.941) (Figure 2.3).[41] Saint Anne sits on a throne set with lions and the Virgin and Child are placed on a stool next to her, while Aaron and David stand either side. Replacing the kings in the blossoms of the tree are half figures of Saint Anne's three husbands, her two daughters, their husbands and

six children, who are mostly identified by inscriptions. At the summit of the tree the Virgin and Child are depicted once again, although the Virgin is now crowned as Queen of Heaven and is surrounded by golden rays, a visionary aspect that contrasts with the earthly one given below. God the Father and Saint Joseph are placed either side of her, and the Christ Child appears to be reaching for a book that is being offered by his father.[42] A painting by Gerard David, dated c.1490, although known as the *Tree of Jesse*, is so close in iconography to this print that Friedlander has suggested that both may have derived from a common model (Figure 2.4).[43] In this painting, male donors are presented by Aaron and David, and the Virgin at the top of the tree, although not crowned, sits in a cloud, emphasising the visionary aspect.

The existence of both the print and the panel suggests that this form of representation had already become fashionable by the late fifteenth century, before we find it employed on a much larger and more elaborate scale in the early sixteenth century. The Sint-Salvatorskathedraal in Bruges, for example, has a carved and polychromed altarpiece which is thought to date from c.1500 (Figure 2.5).[44] Unfortunately it is not known if this was the original location of the retable, as the cathedral was used as a Calvinist church in the late sixteenth century and any previously existing works were removed. Furthermore, the neo-gothic frame and mid-sixteenth-century painted wings are not original to the work, meaning that any information relating to the donor that may have once been present is now lost. Once again Saint Anne sits at the centre of the composition, her hands together in prayer. Standing immediately to her right is her father, Stollanus, followed by Joachim, Joseph,

Figure 2.3 *Tree of Saint Anne*, Engraving, Master W with Key, c.1480

(Size: 41.6 × 27.4 cm) © Trustees of the British Museum, Reg No. 1858,0417.941

Figure 2.4 *Tree of Jesse*, Painted Panel, Gerard David, c.1490

(Size: 118 × 66 cm) Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon, Image © MBA Lyon—Photo: Alain Basset

Eliud, Hismeria and Saint Servatius. To her left is her mother, Emerentiana, followed by Cleophas, Salome, Elizabeth's husband Zachary, Elizabeth herself and her son, John the Baptist. The tree that grows above the chair unfurls to support other figures in blossoms or calyxes, the top tier from left to right depicts Mary Cleophas; two of her children, Joseph and Jude; the Virgin and Child; followed by James the Greater and Simon and, finally, Mary Salome. Beneath Mary Salome is her second son, John the Evangelist, and Alpheus and

Zebedee stand on pedestals in the frame to the left and right of the composition. The only figure that seems to be missing from the work is that of James the Less, which is unusual, as he was also one of the apostles. The figures are all identified by inscriptions on their banderoles and it is possible that perhaps an error could have been made in either the original polychromy, or in a later restoration.[45]

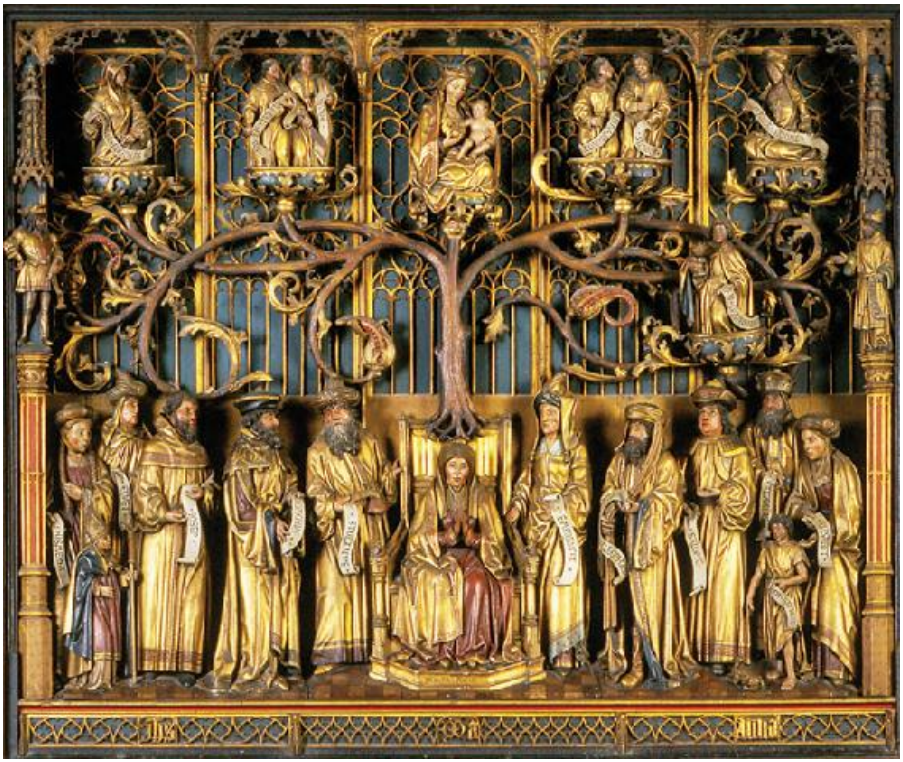


Figure 2.5 Kinship of Saint Anne Altarpiece, Centre Panel, c.1500

(Size: 158.5 × 193 cm) Sint-Salvatorskathedraal, Bruges (Photo: Andreas Lechtape)

On a monumental scale, the marble altarpiece by Adolph Daucher in Annaberg, dated c.1522, combines the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship themes in a far more cohesive manner (Figure 2.6).[46] Jesse lies asleep in the predella and the tree that grows from his stomach supports the ancestors of Christ in blossoms in the lower tier. Either side of the central shrine are the second and third husbands of Saint Anne, Cleophas and Salome, with their daughters, sons-in-laws and grandchildren. The centre however, is reserved for the figures of Anne and Joachim, placed directly beneath those of the Virgin, Joseph and Christ. Even though Jesse is placed in the predella and the tree appears to function as an embellishment of the image, the matrilineal extension to the

Virgin's genealogy has actually been incorporated into the Tree of Jesse itself. The tree grows through Anne and Joachim to support the Holy Family, and the

Figure 2.6 The Saint Anne Altarpiece, Adolph Daucher, c.1522

Church of Saint Anne, Annaberg-Buchholz (Photo: © H&D Zielske/agefotostock)

conflation of Isaiah's prophecy with the legend of Saint Anne is unambiguous.[47] In this example, the role of Anne's first husband can be seen to be as important as that of Anne herself. This reflects an increased interest in Joachim in the early sixteenth century, whose cult grew in the wake of his wife's. Jan van Denemarken, who wrote an early edition of the Life of Saint Anne, also wrote a Life of Saint Joachim, and the Carmelite humanist, Bostius, succeeded in his efforts to have Joachim's feast officially celebrated by the Order from 1498.[48]

Devotion to Saint Anne in these works is taken to an entirely new level, and their conception may derive from a popular allegorical poem known as the *Pèlerinage de l'Ame*, which was written in c.1330 by Guillaume de Deguileville. In this poem, which has previously been associated with the iconography of Our Lady of the Dry Tree, the conception of Mary is described metaphorically as an act of God, who grafted a branch from the root of Jesse onto Saint Anne.[49]

> Until God made a graft onto the apple tree with a scion which was dear to him and which he took from the root of Jesse which he found noble.... It was in Saint Anne that the graft was most fittingly made, of Mary who was the scion, whom God stripped and laid bare of any wild growth that had developed in her root.

Saint Anne is presented as the tree from the root of Jesse which provided the living shoot, the Virgin; Anne is therefore seen as the physical source of man's salvation. This concept can be seen to be supported further by a fifteenth-century mass dedicated to Saint Anne that extolled her as

> this good tree, from which the virgin bloomed through divine influence.... Here is the root praised by all worshipers, from which a virgin came from the root of Jesse, Here is [one] blessed among women, and blessed among mothers.[50]

Consequently, those who appropriated the Tree of Jesse to demonstrate their devotion to Saint Anne also evolved a new type of iconography, where the parents of the Virgin are represented as direct descendants of Jesse, even though there is no biblical foundation for this association. Once this was established, a further iconographical development took place. This involved a truncated version of the image, where although the tree is shown in its simplest form, it is still being used as a metaphor to express the genealogical relationship between Christ, his royal ancestors, and their relationship to Saint Anne and Joachim.[51] An example of this type of iconography can be seen in the Glorification of the Virgin altarpiece, c.1525, attributed to the Master of the Holy Blood and now in the Sint-Jacobskerk in Bruges (Figure 2.7).[52] The central

panel of the triptych has five standing figures in its lower part; these figures carry banderoles with Latin inscriptions which, when read from left to right, relate to passages from the Old Testament and the coming of Christ.[53] Part of the of the prophesy of Isaiah, '*EGREDIT[UR] V[IR]GA DE [R]ADIC[E] JESSE [ET F]LOS'*, can be seen on the banderole to the right of the middle figure. This middle figure is both more elaborately dressed than the others and also wears a crown; it seems likely therefore that he is meant to represent Jesse, even though Jesse himself was not a king. Jesse has two branches emerging from his head, one leads to the breast of Joachim while the other leads to the breast of Saint Anne. Directly above Jesse a blossom supports the Virgin holding the Christ Child, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above her head.

Figure 2.7 The Glorification of the Virgin Triptych, Master of the Holy Blood, c.1525

(Size: Centre Panel, 94.5 × 117 cm). Sint-Jakobskerk, Bruges © www.lukasweb.be—Art in Flanders vzw (Photo: Dominique Provost)

Various iconographic details indicate that this altarpiece was commissioned by a Franciscan donor; two Franciscan friars can be seen kneeling in prayer in the right wing, and the exterior wings also feature Saint Francis. In addition, there appears to be a visionary aspect to the work, the left wing features the Tiburtine Sibyl, who, according to legend, told the Emperor Augustus that the Son of God would be born. She is depicted here explaining the vision of the Virgin and Child that appears in the sky above them. The right wing features Saint John on the Island of Patmos. He is in the process of writing his Book of Revelation and is gazing at a vision of the Virgin 'clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars' (Revelation 12:1). The narrative therefore moves from left to right, and the truncated Tree of Jesse with Anne and Joachim is used to explain exactly how Emperor Augustus' vision was fulfilled, while the Virgin's white robes serve to further emphasise her virginity.

Other variations of this imagery exclude the figure of Jesse, yet they can still

be seen as a visual signifier for the larger iconography, implying that the association between the root of Jesse and parents of the Virgin was commonly accepted by the 1520s. An example of this type of abridged representation can be found on the *Parents of the Virgin* panel in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (Figure 2.8).[54] Although nothing is known of the provenance of this painting prior to 1845, museum records confirm that it was first restored by them in 1944, when it seems that the paint layer was removed and placed on canvas, prior to being remounted on wood. It is not clear, however, whether the current size is original, or whether the painting was cut slightly at the top edge. The border of the cloak of Saint Anne carries the name CORNILIS VA CONIXLO SCERNIR, and is dated 1526. Consequently, it is assumed that the artist must have been Cornelis Schernier Van Coninxloo II, who was active in Brussels between 1526 and 1559.

Figure 2.8 *Parents of the Virgin*, Painted Panel, Cornelis Schernier Van Coninxloo II, 1526

(Size: 43 × 52.5 cm) © Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

The parents of the Virgin, Joachim and Anne, are represented elegantly dressed, sitting in front of a fantastical architectural structure, which combines gothic forms with classical detail. From the area of their chests float the roots of a tree that grows upwards to terminate in a flower containing the half figure

of the Virgin, who is depicted breastfeeding the Christ Child. Although not unknown, representations of the lactating Virgin are relatively unusual in Tree of Jesse iconography, and this detail may therefore indicate a special devotion on behalf of the donor. In niches within the architectural structure are two standing figures who direct our gaze towards the Virgin and Child. From their style of dress they appear to represent prophets, in all probability Isaiah and Jeremiah. Either side of this architectural structure are background scenes taken from the story of the Birth of the Virgin: the Annunciation to Joachim and the Meeting at the Golden Gate, in which the kiss or embrace represents the conception of the Virgin by Saint Anne.

Although neither the Protoevangelium of James nor the Golden Legend specifies that the conception of the Virgin actually took place during the Meeting at the Golden Gate, by the late fifteenth century it had become a commonplace visual metaphor.[55] For example, a Book of Hours, Paris c.1490, uses the Meeting to illustrate a prayer celebrating the conception of the Virgin.[56] Further evidence is provided by another Book of Hours, printed by Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre in Paris in 1497 (Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Rosenwald Collection, 442b) (Figure 2.9). In the border surrounding the page illustrating the Annunciation, which marks Matins, there are several scenes from the Life of the Virgin, starting with the Meeting at the Golden Gate. This was not unusual; there are many early fifteenth-century examples where the Golden Gate has been used in this context, for example in both the Bedford Hours (British Library, Add Ms.18850, fol. 32r) and Lamoignon Hours (Gulbenkian Museum, Inv. No. LA237, fol. 25v). However, in Simon Vostre's Book of Hours, an inscription beneath the vignette of the Meeting makes its meaning clear, '*Cõcepit ãna peperit filiam adduxit eam*', which can be translated as 'Anne conceived and bore a daughter'.[57]

One unusual detail in the Brussels Parents of the Virgin panel, not previously acknowledged, is the emphasis placed on Joachim, who seems to be afforded an even more prominent position than his wife. For example, the roots of the tree are firmly placed over his right shoulder, while they barely touch the cloak of Saint Anne. Furthermore, the Virgin's gaze in his direction creates a strong diagonal, linking him directly with the Christ Child. In addition, Anne's gaze looks out to the side of the panel, whereas Joachim looks directly at the viewer, and his pointing finger draws our eyes to the ram at his feet. This emphasis on Joachim may indicate that the patron preferred the more conventional male lineage usually portrayed in Tree of Jesse iconography, even though it is Joseph and not Joachim that is mentioned in the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke. It has been suggested by Marita Lindgren-Fridell that the ram could be a symbol of the sacrificial lamb, or it may be an allusion to Joachim's rejected offering at the Temple; whichever is

the case, it is still puzzling that a ram rather than a lamb is depicted.[58] An alternative hypothesis is that the emphasis on Joachim may indicate a special devotion on the part of the patron; if this is the case then the ram could be linked to him in some kind of heraldic way. Saint Anne's mantel contains the letters '*OC HIN REINIRS*', which seem to have neither a Latin nor Dutch translation and could therefore be part of a name. Unfortunately, no similar name has been found in any records, and it may be that its original meaning has been lost during restoration. Furthermore, as the work has been transferred onto canvas, we do not know if the panel once had wings or a predella, which could have completed its iconographical programme.[59]

As Douglas Brine has identified, the fifteenth century was an age when the demand for personal commemoration was articulated by a far wider cross-section of society than ever before.[60] This can be demonstrated by a stone relief panel in Ulm Münster, where a representation of an abridged Tree of Jesse has been used as a memorial for a non-aristocratic family (Figure 2.10). Anne and Joachim are depicted with roots growing from their breasts, these merge to form a tree that supports the Virgin and Christ Child. Unusually, Anne appears on the left of the image with the female donor, and Joachim appears on the right with the male donor. Beneath the relief, an inscription refers to the altar of Johann, Henrich and Konrad Raiser, which was dedicated in 1378 to the Holy Trinity, Saint Anne and all the martyrs.[61] It seems unlikely that this abridged iconography dates from as early as the fourteenth century and, therefore, it is quite feasible that the relief panel was

Figure 2.9 *Annunciation*, From a Philippe Pigouchet/Simon Vostre Book of Hours, Paris, 1497

Rosenwald 442b, Rosenwald Collection, Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C

Figure 2.10 *Parents of the Virgin*, Stone Relief, Date Unknown, Ulm Münster

(Photo: Susan Green)

donated to the cathedral some years later, perhaps by a female descendant of one of the three brothers, the inscription added to ensure that their names would be remembered in perpetuity.

Figure 2.11 The Holy Kinship Altarpiece, Anonymous Antwerp Artist, c.1520–30

(Size: Centre Panel, 105 × 83 cm) M Museum, Leuven (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

A triptych in Leuven, known as the Holy Kinship altarpiece and attributed to an Antwerp artist of c.1520–30, provides an example of how this abridged Tree of Jesse iconography could also be incorporated into standard Holy Kinship imagery (Figure 2.11).[62] The earliest reference to the altarpiece appeared in 1847, when it was recorded as part of the collection belonging to the church of the Groot-Begijnhof in Leuven. It continued to be displayed there until 1966, when it was transferred to the city museum.[63] The central panel depicts Joachim and Saint Anne sitting together on an ornate gothic bench, they are surrounded by Anne's successive husbands, her two younger daughters and their husbands and children, the latter depicted in miniature. Joseph, behind the bench, stands between Joachim and Anne, and above him, in a blossom that terminates the two intertwined branches that grow from roots suspended directly above the heads of her parents, is the Virgin, holding the Christ Child. The function of this triptych is clearly similar to those earlier works that combine Tree of Jesse iconography with the Holy Kinship. It supports the legend of the *Trinubium* and implies that Anne and Joachim, as the New Testament descendants of Jesse, are the physical source; the roots that

provide the *virga* and blossom prophesised by Isaiah. Despite Joseph's appearance in the New Testament genealogies, he is only the father of Christ in name and so is not physically linked to his son in this work, although he is given a central position and is encompassed by the intertwined branches.

The interior panel of the left wing depicts the Rejection of Joachim's Offering in the Temple, and the interior of the right, once again, features the Meeting at the Golden Gate.[64] Not only had this become a commonplace visual metaphor for the conception of the Virgin by the late fifteenth century, but also it seems that it came to have a close association with Tree of Jesse iconography, with some representations actually combining both subjects in the one image.[65] An example of this type can be found on a little-known panel painting that hangs high on the south wall of the nave in the small church of Saint Lorenz in Erfurt, although this was not its original location (Figure 2.12). Jesse is depicted sitting on the ground in the lower part of the panel with the donor's family and their coats of arms on either side of him. The branches of the tree that grow from his breast frame the standing figures of Joachim and Saint Anne, who both have halos and who are represented in an architectural niche that is symbolic of the Golden Gate, inscribed with the date 1521. King David and five other descendants sit in blossoms in the upper part of the tree, and background scenes, viewed through arches to the left and right, depict the Rejection of Joachim's Offering and the Annunciation to Joachim. Two intertwined branches grow from the breasts of Joachim and Anne and break through the top of the niche, culminating in a blossom that supports the Virgin. The Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, hovers above her head. Seated either side of the Virgin, at the top of the panel surrounded by angels, are God the Father and Christ in Majesty. The Virgin appears crowned, without the Christ Child, indicating that this may be a reference to the Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity. The panel therefore emphasises the Virgin's royal and Davidic ancestry, culminating in her coronation as Queen of Heaven, yet, even though an association is being made between the prophecy of Isaiah and the parents of the Virgin, the Tree of Jesse does not actually physically connect the two, although all the branches meet in the Virgin.

As previously discussed, Saint Anne was often considered the patron saint of both pregnant women and those who wished to become pregnant. Evidence for this association can be found in the Register of the Guild of Saint Anne in Ghent, c.1476 (Royal Collection, RCIN 1047371), which states that the guild would offer charitable assistance to encourage remarriage and the subsequent bearing of children.[66] The donors may therefore be giving thanks for the blessing of their many children, or alternatively the work could have been commissioned as an epitaph panel. Gerhard Weilandt, who examined the numerous epitaph panels in Saint Sebald Church in Nuremberg, identified

three elements that all these works have in common. First, the presence of a saint or religious scene; second, a kneeling donor(s) with coat(s) of arms; and finally, an inscription with details of who the work commemorates.[67] Although this painting has two of the three requirements to classify it as an epitaph panel, it does not have an inscription, although this may have been separated from the work when it was moved from the monastery church of Saint Peter's in Erfurt after the Reformation.[68] Furthermore, three of the girls represented in this image are dressed in nun's habits and have red crosses painted on their veils, which may be a sign that they died before the painting was commissioned. The reference to Tree of Jesse iconography in epitaphs or commemorative works could be linked to a late medieval interest in lineage and ancestry, which Brandenbarg has suggested may in turn be related to a prosperous middle class wanting to imitate and adopt existing customs from courtly circles.[69] In the Saint Lorenz panel, the juxtaposition of the genealogy of Christ with

Figure 2.12 *Tree of Jesse* and *Parents of the Virgin*, Painted Panel, 1521

Saint Lorenz Church, Erfurt (Photo: © Constantin Beyer, Weimar)

the donor's own family not only emulates aristocratic and royal precedents, but may also reflect the donor's own dynastic aspirations. This subject will be discussed further in Chapters Four and Six.

The first pier on the south side of the nave in Erfurt Cathedral has a painting of the Tree of Jesse and Parents of the Virgin that is both similar in content and

stylistically very close to the panel in Saint Lorenz (Figure 2.13).[70] As this painting is signed Petrus Moguntinus (Peter von Mainz), Oscar Doering has concluded that the artist of both this and the Saint Lorenz panel must be one and the same.[71] The donors appear either side of Jesse at the bottom of the work; the female donor is accompanied by her children, and the male donor is seen reading from an open book. Jesse, who is identified by the inscription '*JESSE PATER DAVID*', has a vine growing from his breast, its branches divide to support six kings on either side of the panel, also identified by inscriptions.[72] Background scenes feature the Rejection of Joachim's Offering on the left and the Annunciation to Joachim on the right. Joachim and Anne stand in front of the Golden Gate at the centre of the panel. Two branches from their chests intertwine to support the Virgin in a blossom above them. She is crowned as Queen of Heaven, and God the Father and Christ in Majesty stand either side of her, while the dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above her head. Again this may be a reference to the Coronation of the Virgin by the Trinity. The frame carries the inscription *Andreas Tuchheffter trib. pot. i. me pingi iussit ad honorem Sanctissime Conseptionis Marie Anno a natalia christiano 1513* (Andreas Tuchheffter commissioned me to paint a picture in honour of the Holy Conception of Mary in the year 1513 from the birth of Christianity). Although the donor is portrayed with his family, the absence of his coat of arms and the fact that the inscription is ambiguous may suggest that this work was not intended to have a commemorative function. Nevertheless, whatever his intention, the donor can be seen to be creating a visual analogy between his family and the family of Christ.

Some smaller works condense the combined iconography of the Tree of Jesse and the Meeting at the Golden Gate even further, removing Jesse and his descendants, yet, as in previous examples, the reference to Isaiah's prophecy is still clear. An example of this type of imagery can be found in a painting at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels, which has been attributed to the Netherlandish painter known as the Master of the Morrison Triptych, who was active in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century (Figure 2.14).[73] It features Joachim and Anne framed at the entrance to the Golden Gate, from their breasts two branches emerge that culminate in a blossom supporting the Virgin, a banderole carries the Latin inscription '*Ecce nostr(a)e salutis originē*' (Behold the origin of our salvation), followed by the date 1500. The Virgin is clearly identified as the origin of Salvation, yet the physical source is her parents.[74]

In a logical association of ideas, some works combine this imagery with that of the Annunciation, creating a chronology between the prophecy, the conception of the Virgin and the conception of Christ.[75] For example, an early sixteenth-century Netherlandish double-sided ivory in the Sculpture Collection

of the Staatliche Museum in Berlin, has the Annunciation on one side with the abridged Tree of Jesse/Anne and Joachim image on the other. In a more explicit example, from an early sixteenth-century Flemish Book of Hours (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod 1984, fol.50), three small vignettes form the border around the Annunciation (Figure 2.15).[76] The first of these features the Rejection of Joachim's Offering in the Temple, followed by the Annunciation to Joachim and then the Meeting at the Golden Gate. This

Figure 2.13 *Tree of Jesse* and *Parents of the Virgin*, Painted Panel, Peter von Mainz, 1513

(Size: 180 × 170 cm) Cathedral of Saint Mary, Erfurt (Photo: © Constantin Beyer, Weimar)

Figure 2.14 *Meeting at the Golden Gate*, Painted Panel, Attributed to the Master of the Morrison Triptych, c.1500

(Size: 39 × 28 cm) Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (Photo: Susan Green)

Figure 2.15 *Annunciation*, From a Flemish Book of Hours, c.1520–30

(Size: 13.4 × 8.2 cm) Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, ANL/Vienna, Cod 1984. fol.50

final image appears directly beneath the Annunciation. Branches growing from the breasts of Anne and Joachim support a bust of the Virgin, creating a visual

sequence of events that lead us from Isaiah's prophecy to the Incarnation and, ultimately, Salvation. The idea that Joachim and Anne play an important part in this process is even more overt in a late fifteenth-century woodcut on the opening parchment folio of a German prayer book in Munich (Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 105) (Figure 2.16).

Figure 2.16 *Parents of the Virgin*, Woodcut From a German Prayer Book, Fifteenth Century

(Size: 14.0 × 10.0 cm) Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, München, Cgm 105, fol. 1r.

Here the roots of the tree which grow from the breasts of Joachim and Anne loop around the Virgin to provide a support for Christ on the Cross. This image manages to encompass the whole story of salvation, evoking not only the Tree of Jesse, but also the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Cross.[77]

It seems, therefore, that a late medieval interest in the cult of Saint Anne and the legend of the *Trinubium* contributed to a rejuvenation of Tree of Jesse iconography in the Netherlands and Germany. By examining the subject across various media, it is possible to see how a conflation of the themes of the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship at the end of the fifteenth century led to fully developed and cohesive representations in the early sixteenth. These images were then either abridged or adapted to reflect the particular concerns of individual patrons, and some may have had a commemorative function. In several of the works discussed, Joachim seems to be at least as important as Saint Anne, whereas in other examples it seems that the subject has been appropriated to imply a much more specific role for Saint Anne in the redemptive process, and she actually replaces Jesse as the root of Isaiah's prophecy. This level of devotion to Saint Anne appears to be particular to the Netherlands and Germany, as in England and Italy the saint was never ascribed any salvific powers.[78] In several of these abbreviated Tree of Jesse images, the Virgin is represented alone in the flower blossom, without the Christ Child in her arms. Séverine Lepape has interpreted this iconography as indicative of a sliding semantic: the Virgin is no longer the *virga*, the rod or shoot prophesised by Isaiah, but she is now the flower, the *flos*, elevated to the same status as Christ himself.[79] If this is the case, then are we to assume that Saint Anne has become the *virga*?[80] This leads us to the extremely contentious issue of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. However, before considering how this doctrine may have affected Tree of Jesse iconography, it is important to understand exactly what belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin entailed.

The Tree of Jesse and the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin

The Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites all defended the notion of the triple marriage of Saint Anne, although from 1500 there was increasing criticism from some scholars who were concerned that this conflicted with their belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. Whilst all parties believed in the immaculacy of Mary, the controversy centred on the precise

moment at which she became free of sin. A feast dedicated to Anne's conception of the Virgin was celebrated in some English monasteries by the eleventh century and, at around the same time, a feast devoted to Saint Anne herself was also beginning to be established in Western Europe.[81] However, the proposal that the Virgin, like her son, had actually been immaculately conceived was opposed by most eminent theologians, including Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter Lombard and the Dominican, Thomas Aquinas. They proposed that Mary was not immaculately conceived, but freed from original sin whilst still in the womb of Saint Anne, a doctrine known as the Maculate Conception. Aquinas argued that Mary could not have been free of original sin at her conception, because no-one can be redeemed before the Redemption.[82]

Nevertheless, the cult of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin continued to be supported in some quarters, and the idea that the Virgin might have been cleansed prior to her conception, that she was pre-redeemed, was developed further by the English Franciscan John Duns Scotus (d.1308). He argued that the Virgin, like all other human beings, was in need of redemption, but through the merits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice, given in advance, she was conceived without the stain of original sin. Duns Scotus's argument was subsequently disseminated both at Oxford and the University of Paris, and, by the end of the fourteenth century, belief in the concept of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin was generally accepted by most Franciscans. As Suzanne Stratton has pointed out, this caused quite a problem for the Dominicans, who could not change their position without seeming to repudiate the authority of Thomas Aquinas.[83] Consequently, the subject became one of great controversy, and in 1431 the Council of Basel was asked to settle the matter one way or the other. In 1438 they affirmed the dogma, but, as the church was in schism, the Council was subsequently declared invalid and the debate raged on, fuelled by the new power of the printing press. Finally, in 1476, the Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV, was forced to intervene. He confirmed the legitimacy of a feast day for the Conception of the Virgin and approved two offices for its celebration, officially confirming the date as the 8th December.[84] A subsequent bull expressly commended the celebration of the feast of the Conception, and the liturgical cult of Saint Anne spread rapidly when the feast of Saint Anne was placed on the Roman calendar in 1481.[85] However, the pope had still not expressly pronounced the conception immaculate, the feast was called the Conception of the Immaculate Virgin, hence avoiding the question of when she actually became free of sin, and the subject continued to be hotly contested by the Dominicans.[86]

In 1483, as the controversy escalated, Sixtus IV promulgated a papal bull, the *'Grave Nimis'*, which explained that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception was still to be decided on by the church and forbade, on pain of

excommunication, that either opinion be called heretical. Nevertheless, in March 1497 the Sorbonne required all candidates for academic degrees to take an oath to defend the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and in 1499 and 1500 this was followed by the universities of Cologne and Mainz. Vincenzo Bandello, Master of the Dominican Order from 1501 to 1505, published two treatises attacking the Immaculate Conception, but they could not turn the tide, and by 1507 several other universities in Western Europe had followed the example set by the Sorbonne, Cologne and Mainz.[87] The matter was not finally settled, however, until the nineteenth century.[88]

Clearly the debate surrounding the question of the conception of the Virgin led to a greater consideration of the role of Saint Anne in the biblical story, and belief in the Immaculate Conception became closely linked to her cult. As early as the eighth century, the Deacon of Aquileia had claimed that the Virgin had derived her name from the *virga Jesse*, which was 'devoid from the knots of sin', implying that she was immaculate at her origin.[89] It seems therefore that the Tree of Jesse could be seen as a way of alluding to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, linking notions about genealogical purity with the prophecies of the Old Testament. However, this was not considered inherent in its iconography, and the proposal made by Émile Mâle, Mirella Levi D'Ancona, and more recently by Lepape, that the Tree of Jesse by the late fifteenth century had actually come to be seen as a symbol of the doctrine, is by no means certain.[90]

D'Ancona contends that by giving the central position in the Tree to the Virgin, and by either omitting the figure of Christ altogether, or representing the Tree in conjunction with Marian symbols, the immaculists had endowed the Tree of Jesse motif with a new meaning.[91] This interpretation was supported by Barbara Lane in her analysis of the miniature cycles in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves.[92] Lane suggests that the last of the miniature cycles, which illustrates the Saturday Hours and Mass of the Virgin, depicts various aspects of the Immaculate Conception. She defends this argument by citing the third and fourth miniatures of the cycle, which show the Virgin without the Christ Child crowning a Tree of Jesse, followed by a depiction of Joachim and Anne receiving the rays of the Holy Spirit directly from the Lord, in what appears to be a rare version of the conception of the Virgin. Lane's argument rests on both images being displayed together, but if we consider single images where the Virgin appears alone in the Tree, this analysis may be overly reductive. For example, this type of representation can also be found in the German editions of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* blockbooks discussed in the previous chapter, yet there is no suggestion that these texts have an immaculist association. Furthermore, as we have seen, the Virgin may also appear without the Christ Child in Trees of Jesse that incorporate her

Coronation by the Trinity.

Figure 2.17 The Virgin and Tree of Jesse Triptych, Attributed to Peter von Mainz, c.1520

(Size: Centre Panel, 161 × 150 cm) Saint Severus Church, Erfurt (Photo: © Constantin Beyer, Weimar)

By the end of the fifteenth century, representations of the Virgin as the Apocalyptic Woman were the images most frequently used to illustrate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.[93] It seems logical to assume therefore that the Tree of Jesse, when combined with elements of this image, may also be interpreted as immaculist. However, when we examine the iconography in detail, it seems that this may not necessarily be the case. For example, a triptych, in the Blasius Chapel in the Saint Severus Church in Erfurt, is an exceptional rendering of this conflation of themes, yet it may not have been intended as an immaculist image (Figure 2.17).[94] The work has been attributed to Peter von Mainz, c.1520, but, unfortunately, there is no information regarding its patron. The central panel depicts a standing Virgin crowned as Queen of Heaven; she has the Christ Child in her arms and a crescent moon at her feet. She is completely surrounded by the golden rays of the sun. Sitting in a mountainous landscape in the corners of the panel below are Saint John the Evangelist and Isaiah. A speech scroll carries Isaiah's prophecy '*Ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel*' (Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel).[95] At the top of the panel Jesse sits directly above the Virgin, two golden branches grow from his chest and, sitting in blossoms amongst vine leaves and grapes, are the busts of twelve ancestors of Christ. The interior wings depict Saint Andrew and Saint Katherine, and the exterior wings Saint Erasmus and Saint Laurence. Therefore, in spite of its subject matter, there is no indication that

the altarpiece was conceived of as anything other than an expression of the genealogy of Christ and devotion to the Virgin, and to assign it an immaculist function without any further evidence seems rather hasty.

Figure 2.18 The Virgin Mary Altarpiece, c.1520

(Size: 240 × 240 × 20 cm) Västerås Cathedral, Sweden (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

This argument is supported by the presence of a second altarpiece of approximately the same date, the Antwerp Virgin Mary Altarpiece in Västerås Cathedral in Sweden, which features similar iconography (Figure 2.18).[96] This work has been expressly described as an obvious reflection of the unknown patron's belief in the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, yet several factors indicate that this interpretation may be rather problematic.[97] The central panel depicts the Virgin, crowned as Queen of Heaven, set against a radiant mandorla. She is standing on a crescent moon and is surrounded by a garland of roses. A sleeping Jesse lies under the crescent moon, resting against the trunk of a tree, the branches of which rise up to support his descendants

and enclose the Virgin. In the corners of this central scene two prophets are holding scrolls with inscriptions; one refers to the prophecy of Isaiah, '*egredietur virga de radice Jesse*' and the second, although barely legible, appears to refer to a second Old Testament prophecy. Not only do the inscriptions not support the argument for an immaculist meaning, but also the presence of the garland of roses seems to indicate a particular devotion to the rosary. This was a subject that was vigorously propagated by the Dominicans from the late fifteenth century, whose governing body, as we have seen, was violently opposed to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. Furthermore, the Dominicans are also known to have used imagery associated with the Apocalyptic Woman. This is evident when we consider the remaining fragment of an altarpiece, dedicated to the rosary and originally in the Dominican church in Nuremburg, which features the Virgin in a mandorla, on a crescent moon, surrounded by a garland of roses.[98] Therefore, many images that have been interpreted by scholars as immaculist, could have also found equal favour among Dominicans, as even though they illustrate the Virgin Immaculate, they do not categorically represent her immaculate conception by Saint Anne.

Nevertheless, it does seem that the Tree of Jesse, when combined with certain symbols or inscriptions, may express an immaculist meaning. Several authors, for instance, have suggested that it is alluding to the doctrine when represented in its abbreviated form, and particularly when combined with the Meeting at the Golden Gate.[99] Certainly, the inscription on the previously discussed painting by Peter von Mainz in Erfurt Cathedral seems to support this hypothesis, as the scroll over the kneeling donor reads '*Sancta Immaculata Concepcio sit nostra sempiterna salus et protectio*' (The Holy Immaculate Conception is our salvation and protection) (Figure 2.13). An early sixteenth-century woodcut, of either Netherlandish or Hispanic/Flemish origin, now in the Escorial library (Ms.A-IV-10, fol.7v), also appears to have immaculist connotations (Figure 2.19). Saints Joachim and Anne are depicted at the bottom of the page with branches coming from their chests; these terminate in a blossom supporting a crescent moon on which stands the Virgin, represented without the Christ Child, but with the dove of the Holy Spirit. In the upper right corner of the image, God in Majesty is blessing the scene, and a scroll surrounding the Virgin contains the inscription '*tota pulchra es amica mea et macula non es in te*' (Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee), which is often associated with an immaculist meaning.[100] However, as Virginia Nixon has pointed out, even the presence of this inscription can be misleading, as it also appears in reference to the Virgin's virginity in a rosary handbook stemming from Dominican sources.[101]

Moreover, it seems that if the donor was intent on expressing his devotion to

the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, there was other iconography available that was far more explicit than the Tree of Jesse. For example, images of the Virgin as a tiny infant in Saint Anne's womb were often used in this context, as were depictions of the Virgin surrounded by fifteen symbols of her purity.[102] Although the inclusion of the

Figure 2.19 *Parents of the Virgin*, Woodcut (Netherlandish or Hispanic/Flemish), Early Sixteenth Century

(Size: 21.0 × 15.0 cm) © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL—Escorial Monastery Library, Madrid, Ms.a-IV-10, fol.7v

blossoming branch of the rod of Jesse as one of these symbols may suggest an association between immaculist ideas and Isaiah's prophecy, this was by no means exclusive.[103] Rare examples where the Litanies are conflated with the Tree of Jesse may be interpreted as immaculist, although even these images can be ambiguous, as without inscriptions that make their meaning clear, they could also be used by maculists to illustrate the sanctification of the Virgin in her mother's womb.

If we consider the series of Lives of Saint Anne, it is obvious that the saint was revered by many theological scholars, regardless of their views on the Immaculate Conception. For example, the Carthusian Petrus Dorlandus (1454–1507), wrote two Lives of Saint Anne and, despite his order's support for the Immaculate Conception, he was also involved in a collaborative effort with the Dominican, Dominicus van Gelre from Aachen.[104] Their text, the *Legendae Sanctae Annae*, which appeared in 1497, was so popular, particularly in Germany, that it was also translated into the vernacular.

It seems therefore that Saint Anne became a figure of great veneration, supported not only by those who believed in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, but also by those who did not. The Lives, which achieved unprecedented success in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, vigorously promoted the propagation of her cult, and the use of Tree of Jesse iconography to illustrate her relationship to the family of Christ does not necessarily infer an immaculist subtext. Although the Tree of Jesse may have had a secondary connection with the concept of the Immaculate Conception, in the absence of defining text it seems it was never really perceived as a comprehensive illustration of the doctrine. The fact that Tree of Jesse iconography all but vanished in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, even though the Immaculate Conception remained an important theme, seems to support this hypothesis.[105] Its main function was always to illustrate the genealogy of Christ and the Virgin and, as such, was embraced by maculists and immaculists alike.

Conclusion

The figure of Saint Anne and the myth woven around the story of her life was clearly extraordinarily popular in Germany and the Netherlands in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and played a major part in renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography. Saint Anne was promoted by many humanist scholars as an appropriate role model for women to emulate, and

prayers to Saint Anne were perceived to have considerable authority due to the nature of her family connections. According to her supporters, she was an important link in the story of salvation, and it is not surprising that the Tree of Jesse was appropriated to demonstrate the great power accorded to her by virtue of her lineage. In several of the works discussed, Joachim, whose cult grew in the wake of his wife's, seems to be at least as important as Saint Anne, whereas in other examples it seems that the Tree of Jesse has been completely subsumed. Saint Anne replaces Jesse as the root of Isaiah's prophecy, implying a much more specific role for her in the redemptive process. By considering the iconography in different media, it has been possible to see a development from the late fifteenth-century conflations of the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship, to fully evolved representations in the early sixteenth century. These images were then often abridged or adapted to reflect the individual concerns of their patrons; even so, the abbreviated image is still a visual signifier for the larger iconography. It also appears that some of the works discussed may have had a commemorative function, linking ideas of holy and earthly lineage.

The notion that the Tree of Jesse had actually come to be seen primarily as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin by the late fifteenth century is by no means certain. Although there was obviously an association between the cult of Saint Anne and the conception of the Virgin, there is no evidence that Tree of Jesse iconography was exclusively employed by those who believed in the doctrine. The numerous Lives of Saint Anne in circulation at the end of the fifteenth century played a major role in promulgating her cult and, as Brandenbarg has pointed out, in most of these Lives the Immaculate Conception is not an important element.[106] Clearly, the new forms of Tree of Jesse representation that emerged at this time reflected the beliefs of both maculists and immaculists alike, and it is important when considering these images to understand the circumstances of their commission, as without context they can be easily misunderstood.

Confraternities played an important part in spreading the veneration of Saint Anne. They were responsible for commissioning texts and altarpieces, as well as acquiring relics and securing indulgences, all of which encouraged donations and endowments. Several works, thought to have been commissioned by Saint Anne confraternities, feature some kind of Tree of Jesse iconography, particularly those associated with the Carmelites; these and other works commissioned by religious orders are examined in the following chapter.

Notes

1. The most recent publications written in English to discuss this are Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, and Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne*. See also Beda Kleinschmidt, *Die Heilige Anna, Ihre Verehrung In Geschichte, Kunst und Volkstum* (Düsseldorf: L. Schwann, 1930) and Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anna in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1992).

2. Ton Brandenbarg, *Heilig familieleven:Verspreiding en waardering van de Historie van Sint-Anna in de stedelijke cultuur in de Nederlanden en het Rijnland aan het begin van de moderne tijd* (PhD Diss: Nijmegen, 1990), examines these Lives in some detail. Brandenbarg's findings are summarised in 'Saint Anne and Her Family (the Veneration of Saint Anne in Connection With Concepts of Marriage and the Family in the Early Modern Period)', in Lène Dresen-Coenders ed., *Saints and She-Devils: Images of Women in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (London: Rubicon Press, 1987), 101–127. The Lives are discussed again in greater detail in his chapter 'Saint Anne, A Holy Grandmother and Her Children', in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker ed., *Sanctity and Motherhood, Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages* (New York and London: Garland Pub, 1995), 31–64.

3. For a discussion of the origins of the iconography and examples of representations of the Holy Kinship in England, see Naydenova-Slade, *Images of the Holy Kinship in England*.

4. Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 205. First proposed in *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 227, d'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, 46–50, and Séverine Lepape, 'L'Arbre de Jessé: une image de l'Immaculée Conception?', *Médievalés*, Vol. 57 (2009), 113–136.

5. See for example Matthew 12:46, Luke 8:19, John 2:12, John 7:3–5, Mark 6:1–3, and Matthew 13:54–55.

6. Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford: The Claredon Press, 1924), 38.

7. See Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. 3 (Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity from Constantine the Great to Gregory the Great, 311–600 AD) (Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1891), 201–203. Four of these brothers, along with sisters, are mentioned in Mark 6:3, 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joseph, and Jude, and Simon? are not also his sisters here with us?'

8. A translation of Jerome's '*The Perpetual Virginity of Blessed Mary*' can be found in Schaff and Wace eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series, Vol. 6 (St Jerome: letters and select works), 758–778.

9. Matthew 27:56, 'Among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee', and Mark 15:40, 'And there were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome'. Mary the mother of James is also mentioned by Luke 24:10 in his description of the Resurrection.

10. Galatians 1:19, 'But other of the apostles I saw none, saving James the brother of the Lord'.

11. John 19:25, 'Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen'.

12. Matthew 10:3 and Mark 3:18.

13. One of the earliest known expressions of this concept appears in an anonymous Easter

sermon of c.870–80, surviving in a single manuscript written at Saint Oyan (Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 628). See Naydenova-Slade, *Images of the Holy Kinship in England*, 19.

14. Mark 16:1, 'And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus'.

15. Matthew 4:21, 'And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them'.

16. This text has also been attributed to Haymo of Halberstadt, a German Benedictine monk. For the discussion of the issue of attribution see Baudoin de Gaiffier, 'Le Trinubium Annae —Haymon d'Halberstadt ou Haymon d'Auxerre?', *Analecta Bollandiana*, Vol. 90 (1972), 289–298.

17. The *Compendium* outlines the Old Testament genealogy of Christ beginning with Adam. It is often illustrated with circle and line genealogical schemata and sometime pictures. Copies of the *Compendium* were commonly attached either to the Bible, or to Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica*. See William Hampton Monroe, *Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Century Illustrated Genealogical Manuscripts in Roll and Codex: Peter of Poitier's Compendium* (PhD Diss: Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 1990), 81.

18. Jacobus de Voragine, 'The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary', in *The Golden Legend, Readings on the Saints* (translated by William Granger Ryan), Vol. II, 150. For Aquinas's argument against the *Trinubium* see his *In Omnes Sancti Pauli Apostoli Epistolas Commentaria I, Ad Galatas*, Chapter 1, Lesson 5 (Leodii: H. Dessain, 1857–8), 22–27. For a discussion of the spread of the *Trinubium* legend and the attitude of different theologians, see Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe*, 17–24.

19. Luke 1:36 describes Elizabeth as the cousin of the Virgin.

20. A study of the cult of Saint Servatius was conducted by Matthias Zender in *Räume und Schichten Mittelalterlicher Heiligenverehrung in ihrer Bedeutung für die Volkskunde* (Düsseldorf: Rheinland-Verlag, 1959), 75–86. Zender states that the cult of the saint had existed from as early as the eighth century, although the first official hagiography by Jocundus was not written until the eleventh century, with further Lives in Latin and the vernacular appearing from the twelfth century. Zender maps the dense concentration of the cult in the area between and around the Rhine and the Meuse, which also spread to Saxony, Bavaria and beyond. One of a number of posthumous miracles described by Jocundus tells the story of how the saint helped Charlemagne gain glorious victory over the Saracens; this ensured the veneration of Saint Servatius by all subsequent German emperors. See Kim Vivian, Ludo Jongen, and Richard H. Lawson, *The Life of Saint Servatius, A Dual-Language Edition of the Middle Dutch Legend of Saint Servatius by Heinrich von Veldeke and The Anonymous Upper German Life of Saint Servatius* (translated with commentary and introduction) (Lewiston and Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006).

21. Servatius' genealogy had a fixed place in the Lives of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. See Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe*, 25 and 34–35.

22. Naydenova-Slade, *Images of the Holy Kinship in England.*

23. Naydenova-Slade states that the way that the Holy Kinship was depicted in England was sufficiently different to the majority of Continental examples to suggest that its

iconography evolved largely independently. While early English examples tend to depict Christ's generation as adults, associating the *Trinubium* legend with the apostles, later fifteenth-century examples are more child-centric. This she believes can be associated with the rise in importance of the cult of Saint Anne in England towards end of the fourteenth century, when the saint came to be associated with her ability to intercede in child related matters. Naydenova-Slade, *Images of the Holy Kinship in England*, 17 and Chapter Three.

24. Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe*, 53. According to Esser, the earliest known representation of the Holy Kinship in Germany can be found in a stained glass window in Regensburg Cathedral, this dates from the first quarter of the fourteenth century, 69.

25. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne and Her Family', 101–127.

26. See Karin Tilmans, 'Sancta Mater Versus Sanctus Doctus?—Saint Anne and the Humanists', in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker ed., *Sanctity and Motherhood, Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, 331–351.

27. Peter Spufford, *Power and Profit, The Merchant in Medieval Europe* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 228–232.

28. Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 182–185.

29. Renée Nip, in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker and Renée Nip eds., *The Prime of Their Lives: Wise Old Women in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Leuven and Dudley: Peeters, 2004), 39.

30. For a discussion of the relationship between humanism and the Modern Devotion movement see Regnerus Richardus Post, *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968).

31. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne, A Holy Grandmother and Her Children', 31–64.

32. Anne Rudloff Stanton, *The Queen Mary Psalter, A Study of Affect and Audience* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2001), 152.

33. See Rudolf Breuing, *Die Kunst und Kulturdenkmäler in Rheine*, Vol. 2 (Steinfurt: Tecklenborg, 2007), 150–153 and Mechthild Beilmann-Schöner ed., *In Cruce Salus 1210–2010*, Catalogue to the Exhibition Das Kulturerbe der Kreuzherren in Westeuropa (Rheine: Stadt Rheine, 2010), 258.

34. Elizabeth L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood: Gender, Dynasty and Visual Culture in the Later Middle Ages* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 11.

35. A second sandstone relief of c.1460/80, formerly in the monastery church of Vinnenberg in Westphalia, but now in the Westfalian State Museum for Art and Cultural History in Münster, features similar iconography, for further information see Jutta Frings and Jan Gerchow, *Krone und Schleier: Kunst aus mittelalterlichen Frauenklöstern* (Munich: Hirmer, 2005), 356–357. In addition, there are several examples of this type of composition among carved German altarpieces of the early sixteenth century, for instance: the altarpiece on the high altar of the Chapel of Saint Francis Xavier in Bieselbach bei Horgau, near Augsburg; the altarpiece on the side altar in the Marienkircke in Anklam; and the altarpiece in the Heilig Kreuz Münster in Swäbisch Gmünd. Two painted altarpieces in the Tiroler Landesmuseen in Innsbruck, known as the Annenberger Altarpiece and Brixen Heilige Sippe Altarpiece, provide a further comparison. Other retables combine the Tree of Jesse with representations of Saint Anne just with the Virgin and Child, for example, the altarpiece in the Präsidentenkloster Chapel in Schleswig, the altarpiece in the parish church of Friedland and the altarpiece in the church of Sankt Nikolaus in Gundelsheim. Some of

these examples are discussed further in Chapter Four.

36. Woven into the corners of the tapestry are two coats of arms and the date 1501, the lower left corner has the arms of the Rheingau family, Hilchen von Lorch, and the lower right has the arms of the house of Derer von Diez. These two families were linked together when Johann I Hilchen von Lorch married Agnes von Diez in the middle of the fifteenth century. It has been suggested by Winfried Wilhelmy that, as the Hilchen von Lorch family had close ties to the now destroyed Mainz Liebfrauenkirche, the tapestry may have been intended as a gift for the church, perhaps given by the son of Johann and Agnes in commemoration of his parents. Wilhelmy, *Dragon, Griffin and Courtly Love, Mainz Tapestries From the Late Gothic Period*, Episcopal Cathedral and Diocesan Museum, Exh. Cat. (Mainz: Verlag Philipp von Zabern, 2000), 57–69. Alternatively the tapestry could have been commissioned by Agnes following the death of her husband. The tapestry is also discussed in Betty Kurth, *Die Deutschen Bildteppiche Des Mittelalter* s, Vol. 3 (Wien: Anton Schroll and Co, 1926), 212–214.

37. Starting with David, these represent the genealogy of Christ as described by Matthew, with the kings of Israel up until the exile to Babylon, followed by eleven patriarchs. The final patriarch represented is Jacob, father of Joseph. It is relatively unusual that Jesse is orientated to the right in this tapestry, as in most representations of this date he is orientated to the left; furthermore, the descendants of Jesse are represented in an counterclockwise direction. Consequently, although the inscriptions are correctly displayed, it seems that the weavers may not have taken into account the reversal of the image.

38. There are other instances where the Tree of Jesse has been assigned a commemorative function, see for example a wall painting, completed sometime after 1453, on the north wall above the Baptistery in the Buurkerk in Utrecht. The inscription was separated from the painting when the church was decommissioned and is now hung separately.

39. For a discussion of the history of tree imagery in iconography related to Saint Anne, see Barbara Baert, 'Anna and the Annunciation. Essay on the Meaning of the Well and the Tree During the Early Middle Ages', *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum Voor Schone Kunsten* (Antwerp, 2002), 9–35.

40. Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe*, 111.

41. Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts c.1450–1700*, Vol. XII (Amsterdam: van Gendt and Co, 1956), 217. A copy after this print, dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, can also be found in the Prints and Drawings Collection of the British Museum (E,1.161). Furthermore, Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts c.1450–1700*, Vol. IV (Amsterdam: van Gendt and Co, 1954), No. 62, has a similar composition, as does a sixteenth-century Book of Hours in the Royal Library in Brussels (Ms IV 104, fol. 174v), attributed to the artist Cornelia van Wulfschkercke from the Convent of the Carmelites of Sion in Bruges. See Alain Arnould, *De la production de miniatures de Cornelia van Wulfschkercke* (Brussels: Vicariat Général des Dominicains, 1998), 34–37. In 1901, during restoration, an early sixteenth-century Tree of Saint Anne wall painting was found at the Begijnhofkerk Sint-Catharina in Tongeren. This was completely repainted in 1936 and unfortunately no records exist to indicate how accurately the repainting followed the original model.

42. Saint Joseph does not appear in Tree of Jesse iconography until the fifteenth century, even though both Matthew and Luke record Christ's descent through him. This is a reflection of

Joseph's rapidly growing cult, which had been promoted by both the Franciscans and Carmelites from the late fourteenth century. However, it was not until 1479 that Pope Sixtus IV universally introduced the feast of Saint Joseph. See Marjory Bolger Foster, *The Iconography of Saint Joseph in Netherlandish Art, 1400–1550* (PhD Diss: University of Kansas, 1978). Representations of Saint Joseph in Tree of Jesse iconography will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

43. Max Friedländer, 'Hans Memlinc and Gerard David', in *Early Netherlandish Painting* (translated by Heinz Norden) Part II, Vol. VI (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1971), 105. In 1493 Hartmann Schedel, in his widely distributed *Schedelsche Weltchronik*, also depicted the family of Saint Anne in flower blossoms. This text can be viewed online on the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek website.

44. Luc Devliegher, 'De Sint-Salvatorskatedraal te Brugge Inventaris', *Kunstpatrimonium van West-Vlaanderen*, Deel 8 (Tielt 1979), 90–91. This altarpiece is also mentioned briefly in Kleinschmidt, *Die Heilige Anna*, 271 and, more recently, in Marjan Buyle and Christine Vanthillo, *Retables Flamands et Brabançons dans les monuments belges* (Brussels: Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap Afdeling Monumenten en Landschappen, 2000), 140–142.

45. A painting on the back of the retable on the high altar of the church of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Martin (c.1505–8) in Schwabach, near Nuremberg, can also be classified as a Tree of Saint Anne. The members of the extended family are represented in flower blossoms on a tree crowned by a standing Virgin with Christ in her arms. Joachim and Saint Anne are represented at the base of the tree, while Anne's other two husbands stand a little distance apart. See Rainer Kahsnitz and Achim Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces, Masterpieces of the Late Gothic* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2006), 258–259.

46. For further information regarding the circumstances of the commission of this work see Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne*, 32–35 and Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 92–98.

47. This is not the only example of this type of iconography; the small Saint Anne altarpiece in the Gottesackerkapelle in Hochsal, near Laufenburg, shows a sleeping Jesse with a tree that has three branches, these support the standing figure of Saint Anne holding an infant Mary and Christ Child, with a patriarch on either side.

48. Tilman, 'Sancta Mater versus Sanctus Doctus?', 342.

49. *Jusques a tant quē entement, Fist Dex faire sus i pommier, D'un greffe quē il avoit chier, Qui fu pris sus la racine, De Jesse qu'il trouva fine… C'est en Sainte Anne ou l'entement, Fu fait tresconvenablement, De Marie qui greffe en fu, Que Dieux despoulla et fist nu, De toute vie(s) sauvagine. Qu'avoit pris en sa racine.* See Hugo van der Velden, 'Petrus Christus's Our Lady of the Dry Tree', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 60 (1997), 89–110. The relevant part of the poem appears with a translation on 92 and 93.

50. *Officium de sancta Anna, de sancto Joachim et de sancto Joseph.* Mit einem Gebetsanhang. Mit Vorrede und dem Konzilsdekret Elucidantibus zur Unbflecktem Empfängnis Mariens, Basel 17.9.1430 (Basel: Martin Flach, pre-1476) 4 V. Translation from Welsh, *The Cult of St. Anne*, 42 and n.71.

51. Mirella Levi D'Ancona has suggested that these abbreviated Tree of Jesse images may reflect the works of Saint Bridget of Sweden, who wrote in her sermon for the Blessing for the First Lesson of Wednesday:

God… while he beheld all the righteous and honest wedlocks that were to exist… foresaw none that… would be like unto the wedlock between Joachim and Anne…. Right meetly are godly wedlocks likened unto fair trees, the root whereof is such a union of two hearts that they are wedded together for the sole motive that from thence honour and glory might accrue to God.

D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, 49, n.119. Saint Bridget constantly refers to the exemplary marriage of the Virgin's parents; see for example, Revelations, Book VI 104, a prayer to Saint Anne, which asks for a blessing on all marriages. Bridget Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 43. See also Ernest Graf, *Revelations and Prayers of Saint Bridget of Sweden. Being the 'Sermo Angelicus'* (translated from the Latin) (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1928).

52. This and other works attributed to the Master of the Holy Blood are discussed briefly in Maximiliaan P. J. Martens ed., *Bruges and the Renaissance, Memling to Pourbus* (Ludion: Stichting Kunstboek, 1998), 109–111 and Cat. Nr. 31.

53. The inscriptions have been transcribed as follows: '*GREMIO V(IR)GO DU* (or *NA*) *TENEBR(AR)UM*', which can be translated as 'from the lap of the Virgin in the gloom', Numbers 24:17, '*ORIET(UR) STELLA EX JACOB (ET CON)SUR(GET)*' (a star shall rise out of Jacob.) and Song of Solomon 4:7, '*TOTA PULCHRA ES AMIC(A) MEA*' (Thou art all fair, O my love.). The final inscription reads '*GREMIU(M) VIRGINIS ERIT SAL(US) POPULORU(M)*' (the lap of the Virgin will be the salvation of the people).

54. This type of abridged iconography can also be found in carved wooden retables, for example on the inner right wing of the carved Antwerp Marian altarpiece, c.1518, in the Marienkirche in Lübeck.

55. In his translation of Chapter Four of the Protoevangelium of James, Montague Rhodes James states that at the meeting of Anna and Joachim at the gate, Anna greets her husband with the words 'Now know I that the Lord God hath greatly blessed me: for behold the widow is no more a widow, and she that was childless *shall* conceive'. See James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, 40.

56. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague, KB.76, F17, fol. 111r.

57. This text is based on the narrative in 1 Kings 1:20 and should be read with the other text in the border '*ad domum Domini in Silo*', taken from 1 Kings 1:24. The inscriptions are therefore drawing a typological link between Anne and Hannah, mother of Samuel.

58. Marita Lindgren-Fridell, 'Der Stammbaum Maria Aus Anna Und Joachim', *Marburger Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, Vol. 11/12 (Marburg, 1938/9), 297.

59. Another version of this painting, which is neither signed nor dated, exists to this day in the chapel of Saint Bernard in Sint-Rumoldus, a small church in Steenokerzeel near Brussels. Despite being almost identical in composition, it is larger and clearly by another hand. The earliest record of this work appears in Alphonse Wauters, *Historie des environs de Bruxelles*, Vol. 1, Book 8 (Brussels: C. Vanderauwera, 1855).

60. Douglas Brine, *Pious Memories: The Wall Mounted Memorial in the Burgundian Netherlands* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 5.

61. *Anno Dni [Domini] MCCCLCCVIII kl. Marcii dotatum est hoc altare in honore sce [sancte] Trinitatis, sce An[n]e et omi [omni] martir[ii] in remedium animarum Iohannis doctoris puerorum in Ulma, Hainrici phisici ibidem et Cunradi doctoris puerorum in Rotwila,*

fratrum doctorum Rayser de ruedlingen suorumque pro genitorum et uxorum. The inscription informs us that Johann Raiser was a teacher in Ulm, Heinrich Raiser was a physician in Ulm and Konrad Raiser was a teacher in Rottweil, and although their altar was in Ulm Münster, the Raiser family actually came from Riedlingen, approximately fifty kilometres south-west of Ulm. I am grateful to Dr Gudrun Litz at the Stadtarchiv in Ulm for her help in transcribing and translating this inscription.

62. See Marjan Debaene in *M Collecties Schilderijen* (Tielt: Uitgeverij Lannoo, 2009), 40–41.

63. Of the thirty surviving Begijnhofs in the Flemish region, the oldest is that of Leuven, established in 1230. See W. A. Olyslager, *The Groot Begijnhof of Leuven* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1983).

64. When closed, the reverse of the left panel features the Resurrection of Christ and the right Saint Adrianus. Victor Brughmans has proposed that the castle in the background of the central panel could be the Castle of Leuven, and he has also suggested that Saint Adrianus on the exterior wing might be a portrait of Maximilian of Austria. See Brughmans, *L'Arbre de Jessé du Béguinage de Louvain* (Louvain: Imprimerie Van Linthout, 1929).

65. In addition to the paintings described here, there is also a fifteenth-century ivory in the Museo Nazionale del Bargello in Florence, which features the Tree of Jesse on the border surrounding a representation of the Meeting at the Golden Gate in the centre (Inv.154. C). The Saint Anne altarpiece by the Netherlandish sculptor Gil de Siloé, in the Saint Anne Chapel of Burgos Cathedral (c.1490), also provides a monumental example of this type of iconography.

66. Kate Heard and Lucy Whitaker, *The Northern Renaissance: Dürer to Holbein*, Exh. Cat. (London: Royal Collections Publications in association with Scala, 2011), 66–67. Tilmans also discusses how from as early as the eighth century, Saint Anne was prayed to by women who longed to become mothers. Tilmans, 'Sancta Mater Versus Sanctus Doctus?', 347.

67. Gerhard Weilandt, *Die Sebalduskirche in Nürnberg* (Petersberg: Imhof, 2007), 246–273.

68. Lindgren-Fridell has suggested that the panel was a gift from Jacob von der Sachsen, however I have been unable to confirm this as there is nothing in the church archive, I have not been able to identify the coats of arms and there is no evidence of an inscription on the front of the panel. There may be something on the back, which I have not had access to. See Lindgred-Fridell, 'Der Stammbaum Maria Aus Anna Und Joachim', 293.

69. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne and Her Family', 121.

70. See Edgar Lehmann and Ernst Schubert, *Dom und Severikirche Erfurt* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1988), 173.

71. Oscar Doering et al., 'Peter von Mainz', in *Meisterwerke der Kunst aus Sachsen und Thüringen* (Magdeburg: Baensch, 1905). Doering also describes a large pair of wings once in the village church of Groβ-Mölβen, between Weimar and Erfurt. Although these wings are now lost, similarities in subject matter and style, particularly with the Saint Lorenz panel, led Doering to suggest that they also were by the same artist or workshop. For a further discussion of works attributed to Peter von Mainz see Margarete Brodmann, *Meister Peter von Mainz: eine Erfurter Malerwerkstatt am Anfang des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Dresden: Risse Verlag, 1935).

72. These are Salomo, Abias, Jonam, Robeam, Josaphat and Asa on the left and David, Manasse, Ezechias, Ozias, Joatham and Achaz on the right of the panel.

73. See Max Friedländer, 'Quentin Massys', in *Early Netherlandish Painting* (translated by Heinz Norden), Vol. 7 (Brussels: La Connaissance, 1972), No. 85, 70. The Morrison Triptych, now in Toledo, Ohio, was named after an earlier owner of the altarpiece.

74. In another example from the Gemäldergalerie SMB in Berlin, dated c.1520 and attributed to an unnamed Netherlandish master, Joachim and Anne appear in a meadow. Again branches from their breasts culminate in a blossom supporting the Virgin and, directly beneath this, is a small vignette depicting the Meeting at the Golden Gate.

75. Bernard of Clairvaux related Isaiah's prophecy to the Annunciation in his Homily on the Annunciation and the Blessed Virgin's Consent, consequently, there are many examples, particularly in manuscript illumination, where Tree of Jesse iconography has been used in conjunction with the Annunciation. See for example the Breviary of Eleanor of Portugal, Netherlandish, 1495–1505 (Morgan Library, New York, MS M.52, fol.388v), the Breviary of Isabelle of Castile, Netherlandish, late 1480s (British Library, Add.Ms 18851, fol.354r), and the Breviary of the Mayer van den Bergh, Southern Netherlandish, c.1510 (Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, MMB.0618, fol.427v).

76. Dagmar Thoss, *Flämische Buchmalerei. Handschriften Schätze aus dem Burgunderreich. Ausstellung d.Handschriften und Inkunabelsammlung d. ÖNB*, Exh. Cat. No. 83. (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1987).

77. Similar iconography can be found on the exterior wing of the Buxheim altarpiece, c.1510, now in the Stadtmuseum, Ulm, but thought to have been originally commissioned from the workshop of Daniel Mauch for the Abbey of Heggbach, a community of Cistercian nuns. It appears again in a hand-coloured woodcut from Ulm, c.1470, now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington (Acc.#:1943.3.865), and in a fifteenth-century *Compendium Hystoriarum* in the British Library (Add.21219), which contains a biblical history arranged in the form of a genealogy.

78. Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 62. Devotion to Saint Anne in northern France will be discussed in Chapter Six.

79. Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 190.

80. In the incipit of a floral prayer dedicated to Saint Anne in a late fifteenth-century prayer book now in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Hague (KB135E19, fol.25v), the saint is depicted alongside her daughter and grandson in the flower blossom.

81. Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 13–16.

82. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Part III, Question 27, 'Of the Santification of the Blessed Virgin'.

83. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, 3. The view of Saint Thomas Aquinas was declared to be obligatory for members of the Order by the general chapters of 1279, 1286, 1313, 1329, 1344 etc., see Archdale Arthur King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders* (London: Longmans, 1955), 363.

84. A brief survey of the calendars of Dominican missals of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries shows that the feast listed for the 8th December is the 'Sanctification of the Virgin', following the decision of the 1388 meeting of the chapter at Rodez. While opposing a feast of the 'conception', this chapter had approved a feast of 'true innocence and sanctification'. The feast of the Sanctification of our Lady was subsequently confirmed by the meeting of the general chapter in 1391 and upheld by the general chapter meeting of 1484 and three successive chapters. See King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, 364–365.

85. Kleinschmidt, *Die Heilige Anna*, 134. The Dominicans gave the feast of Saint Anne the rite of *totum duplex* in the second half of the fifteenth century. See King, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, 367.

86. See Nancy Mayberry, 'The Controversy Over the Immaculate Conception in Medieval and Renaissance Art, Literature, and Society', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 21 (1991), 207–224. However, as Bonniwell identified, even though they were hampered by the constitutions requiring them to teach the accepted interpretation of Saint Thomas, some friars did come to accept the feast of the Conception. See William R. Bonniwell, *A History of the Dominican Liturgy, 1215–1945* (New York: Joseph F. Wagner, 1945), 258.

87. I am grateful to Simon Tugwell O.P. at the Dominican Historical Institute in Rome for information regarding Vincenzo Bandello's treatises.

88. Mayberry, 'The Controversy Over the Immaculate Conception', 214. On 8 December 1854, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the Immaculate Conception a mandatory belief for the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic church.

89. '*Beata haec Virgo et mater Virgae appellatione signata est, quae et perfecti operis intentionem ad superna emicuit, et vitiositatis nodis funditus carens, flexibilis per humilitatem effulsit*'. Transcribed in Jacque-Paul Migne, *Patrologiae Latina*, Vol. 95 (Paris: Garnier, 1844–1867), 567.

90. Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 205. First proposed in *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 227, D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, 46–50 and, Lepape, 'L'Arbre de Jessé: une image de l'Immaculée Conception?', 113–136

91. D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, 46–50.

92. Barbara. G. Lane, 'An Immaculist Cycle in the Hours of Catherine of Cleves', *Oud Holland*, Vol. 87 (1973), 177–204.

93. See Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex, The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York and London: Knopf, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1976), 255–269; Maurice Vloberg, 'The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception', in E. D. O'Connor ed., *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception: History and Significance* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958), 468–475, and Mayberry, 'The Controversy Over the Immaculate Conception', 213–214. The Virgin depicted in this way indicates that she was conceived in the mind of God with the sun and the moon, therefore before the fall and before sin entered the world.

94. This was not the original location of the triptych and nothing is known of its provenance; see Lehmann and Schubert, *Dom und Severikirche Erfurt*, 261.

95. Isaiah 7:14

96. For further details of this altarpiece see John Rothlind, 'Måleri och skulptur möts i altarskåpens konst', in Svenska kyrkan, Västerås och Västerås stift eds., *Reformation pågår—en utställning och en berättelse* (Västerås: Church of Sweden Västerås and Diocese of Västerås, 2017), 24–30.

97. Hans Nieuwdorp ed., *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries*, Exh. Cat. (Antwerp: Muzeen voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993), 60–62. It is suggested that the unknown patron could have been the bishop of Västerås, Otto Svinhufvud, although there is no evidence for this supposition.

98. *Gothic and Renaissance art in Nuremberg, 1300–1550*, Exh. Cat. (Munich and New York: Prestel-Verlag and Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1986), 163–164.

99. See Lindgren-Fridell, 'Der Stammbaum Maria Aus Anna Und Joachim', 302; Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, 12–28; D'Ancona, *Iconography of the Immaculate Conception*, 44–45, and Esser, *Die Heilige Sippe*, 50.

100. Song of Solomon 4:7. For a discussion of how this text is used in the iconography of the Immaculate Conception see Vloberg, 'The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception', 475–480.

101. Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 75.

102. See Vloberg, 'The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception', 468 and 475–480. The Breviary of Mayer van den Bergh, c.1510, illustrates the feast of the Conception of the Virgin with a full page miniature in a floral border. Saint Anne is depicted sitting reading with the tiny Virgin in her womb (Museum Mayer van den Bergh, Antwerp, MMB.0618, fol.387).

103. The other symbols usually depicted are the sun; the crescent moon; the star; the Heavenly Gate; the lily; the Tower of David; the cedar tree; the olive tree; the City of God; the rose bush; the mirror; the fountain; the well of living water, and the enclosed garden.

104. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne and Her Family', 105 and 111–113. Dominicus van Gelre was known not only for his great devotion to Saint Anne, but also for spreading devotion to the rosary.

105. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art*, 18.

106. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne, A Holy Grandmother and Her Children', 38.

3
The Tree of Jesse, the Carmelites and Other Religious Orders

A large number of works which appear to appropriate Tree of Jesse iconography as a means of supporting or promoting the interests of different religious groups, have survived from the late medieval period. This chapter will consider these objects in some detail in an attempt to understand exactly how the function of the motif might have differed according to its use and location. Many of the works discussed are linked to the veneration of Saint Anne, and confraternities dedicated to the saint were a major source of patronage. During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries a number of these were established in Germany by the Carmelite Order, and its monastery in Frankfurt became widely known as the headquarters of the Brotherhood of Saint Anne.[1] The first works to be examined here are the wing panels of an altarpiece believed to have been commissioned on behalf of this Frankfurt Brotherhood. Although well documented, the full iconographic programme of these wings has never been properly considered in the context of a Tree of Jesse study. This will demonstrate exactly how the Carmelites deliberately invoked the Tree of Jesse to communicate their unique relationship with the matrilineal genealogy of Christ, drawing on a well-established motif in order to create a strong identity and communicate a sense of authority. It will also be argued that the altarpiece was subtly devised as a means of advertising the benefits of confraternity membership, necessitated by the competition between mendicant orders for secular donations and bequests. The fact that we are aware of the provenance of the Frankfurt altarpiece is somewhat exceptional, as the context of other works with similar iconography is less well documented. Nevertheless, it has been widely assumed that many of these works were also commissioned on behalf of Carmelite churches; this premise will be challenged. Instead, it will be suggested that other religious groups may have adopted the Carmelites' very specific imagery as part of the wider story of the life of Saint Anne, and, therefore, that the iconography in this context had a different function.

The second part of the chapter will investigate how the Dominicans adopted

Tree of Jesse iconography, and it will be suggested that in the case of the Frankfurt Dominicans, that this may have been in response to Carmelite endeavours in the city. It will also be shown that the Tree of Jesse may have been appropriated by religious orders to create or communicate a sense of communal identity, or in some cases it may have had a didactic function.[2] Finally, an examination of how the rosary was depicted within Tree of Jesse representations will demonstrate how these organisations had no compunction about borrowing iconographic attributes they thought might be attractive to a contemporary audience.

The Carmelites

The new form of Carmelite imagery to emerge in the Netherlands and Germany towards the end of the fifteenth century was to depend heavily on the viewer's fundamental understanding of Tree of Jesse iconography. A Carmelite legend of a vision on Mount Carmel shared many characteristics with the prophecy of Isaiah, and by drawing on traditional Tree of Jesse representation, the Carmelites were able to reinforce the myth surrounding their claim to a special relationship with the Virgin and her mother Saint Anne.

The Carmelites rose to prominence in Europe in the thirteenth century, yet their origins were not in the West. Their name derives from Mount Carmel, a holy site in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, now Syria, which had been identified from the fourth century as the mountain from which the Old Testament prophet, Elijah, had brought down fire on the men of King Ochozias.[3] The first Carmelites were a community of hermits who had established themselves on Mount Carmel, living a life of solitary contemplation in emulation of the anchoritic example set by their patron Elijah. Attacks on the kingdom of Jerusalem by the Saracens eventually forced many Carmelites to emigrate to the West, and by the mid-thirteenth century they were living in urban centres. Consequently, their contemplative life was replaced by an active one, similar to that of the other mendicant orders. Despite attempts to have the Order suppressed by the Council of Lyon in 1274, the Carmelites received papal approval in 1286, the year they also adopted their distinctive white mantle. Finally, in May 1298, they received official endorsement from Boniface VIII.

During this period the Carmelites had already established themselves in several towns and cities in Germany. Their first settlement appears to have

been founded in 1259–60 in Cologne, closely followed by houses in Boppard and Frankfurt.[4] By 1291 there were approximately fifteen houses in the upper Rhineland alone. By contrast, fewer houses were established in the Netherlands, although communities did exist in Brussels, Bruges, Mechelen and Haarlem in the thirteenth century, and new foundations continued to be established in both countries throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[5]

Unlike the Dominicans and Franciscans, the Carmelites lacked a famous founder and, in order to help formulate their identity, they were keen to promote their claim to an ancient and distinguished heritage. This claim, one that went right back to Elijah, was disseminated in a series of short historical treatises from the end of the thirteenth century.[6] Furthermore, the Order also alleged a special relationship with the Virgin, adopting the title *fratres ordinis beatae Mariae de Monte Carmeli*, which had been officially conferred by Pope Innocent IV in a papal bull of 1252. The number of Marian feasts celebrated by the Order increased significantly during the fourteenth century. In 1306, following Franciscan practice, the Carmelites celebrated the feast of the Conception of the Virgin; in 1342, Marian devotions were extended to include a daily mass to the Virgin.

As the mother of the Virgin, Saint Anne acquired a special status for the Carmelites, and from the late thirteenth century onwards her feast was celebrated by the Order on the 26th July.[7] As we have seen in the previous chapter, texts dedicated to the life of Saint Anne spread rapidly throughout Germany and the Netherlands in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Among her many promoters were a number of distinguished humanist scholars, including the Carmelite Arnold Bostius from Ghent (1446–99).[8] Although the Carmelite humanists numbered no more than twenty or so, Bostius's influence, both directly and indirectly, on members of the Order and the larger humanist circle outside, was considerable.[9] Bostius's *Speculum Historiale*, written some time before 1491, wove together the story of the Order's origins with the legend concerning a vision on Mount Carmel.[10] According to this narrative, the first Carmelites, the devout hermits who lived on Mount Carmel, were regularly visited by a young girl, Emerentiana, the mother of Saint Anne. When her parents decided she was old enough to marry, Emerentiana went to the hermits for advice; they prayed for three days and were finally rewarded with a vision. In this vision they saw a beautiful tree with many branches, yet one branch was far more beautiful than all the others and bore an exquisite fruit, from which an even more beautiful flower bloomed. A celestial voice explained the vision to the hermits: the tree represented Emerentiana's marriage, the one beautiful branch symbolised Emerentiana's future daughter, Anne, whilst the fruit on the branch signified

Anne's future daughter, Mary, a virgin, who in turn would give birth to the flower, Christ. Parallels with Isaiah's prophecy are obvious, yet Emerentiana has replaced Jesse as the root of the tree that ultimately produced the flower of Christ. Other contemporary texts further propagated this legend and, according to Ton Brandenbarg, some authors even referred to Emerentiana as the 'root of Jesse'.[11] The other branches on the tree were meant to represent Emerentiana's other descendants, who were to help promote and support the kingdom of God.[12]

The concept of the Virgin as a branch sanctified on the root of Jesse had been widespread among Carmelite theologians from as early as the fourteenth century, and John Baconthorpe (died c.1348) had summed up the notion in his maxim '*virgo fuit concepta ex semine David sanctificato*' (the Virgin was conceived from the sanctified seed of David). This idea was expressed even more eloquently by the Carmelite theologian FitzRalph, in his sermon for the Feast of the Conception in 1342:

> Most pious lady… I believe and acknowledge, since you, the most beautiful branch, gave birth to and brought forth the lasting flower from the root [of] Jesse, but through this, from you… by means of that flower we are liberated from the sin of original man.[13]

By 1369 a special Marian hymn, known as the *Flos Carmeli* (Flower of Carmel), had also become popular.[14] In addition, the Tree of Jesse came to be associated with the life of Saint Anne in Carmelite liturgy. This is evident from a late fourteenth-century missal from the Carmelite convent in London (British Library, Add Ms.44892, fol.165r).[15] The feast of the Conception of the Virgin is illustrated with scenes from the lives of Joachim and Anne, while the first verse of the prophecy of Isaiah, '*egredietur virga de radice Jesse*', is used as the alleluia versicle of the grail of the Conception Mass. Given this established association, any visual representation of the vision on Mount Carmel was also likely to reference the Tree of Jesse, and it is unsurprising that the two themes became intertwined in Carmelite imagery.

A mendicant order incorporates individual and collective poverty into its rule and, consequently, is dependent on secular donations for its livelihood. A lucrative source of income in the late medieval period were the confraternities or brotherhoods that were linked to the monastery churches.[16] These confraternities had several functions and played an important part in the religious life of towns and cities. Not only did they provide the opportunity for members to perform pious acts, thereby easing their journey into the next life, but also members believed that mutual benefits could be gained from the prayers and devotional activities of their fellow members. Furthermore, through regular meetings, confraternities provided a forum for social networks, allowing members the opportunity to make valuable contacts.

Members would pay a subscription in return for the spiritual administration of their brotherhood, which included the saying of regular masses, celebration of special feast days and praying for the dead. Additional donations were made via indulgences and endowments, and members also commissioned works to decorate their chapels.[17] Confraternities tended to adopt a holy patron and Saint Anne was a popular choice for many such organisations, particularly from the latter part of the fifteenth century. This appears to have been linked to a large extent to the activities of the Carmelites, who, having identified the economic potential of such brotherhoods, seem to have actively encouraged them. This has been corroborated by Angelika Döfler-Dierken, whose study of the emergence and spread of Saint Anne brotherhoods in Germany revealed how influential the Carmelites had been in their proliferation.[18] In addition, she ascertained that few confraternities were established prior to 1479, but that their numbers grew rapidly after this period, reaching a peak between 1495 and 1515, when records show approximately 241 brotherhoods dedicated to Saint Anne. Döfler-Dierken's findings have been supported by Virginia Nixon, who, when looking at the introduction of the cult of Saint Anne in Augsburg, discovered that the Carmelites' financial problems in 1494 were a major factor in their decision to introduce their Saint Anne Brotherhood.[19]

The Frankfurt Brotherhood of Saint Anne

One of the most influential confraternities was established by the Carmelite Order in Worms and included among its members not only the bishops of Worms, Mainz, Trier and Cologne, but also the Emperor Maximilian.[20] Despite this, it was the Frankfurt confraternity that was to become the largest and most important.[21] In 1479 the prior of the Frankfurt Carmelite monastery, Rumold von Laupach, applied to incorporate a confraternity of Saint Anne into the brotherhood of the Order, and its foundation followed in 1481.[22] Formal consent was given by Pope Innocent VIII in 1491, although it was only officially ratified by the archbishop of Mainz in 1493.[23] This was also the year that the monastery acquired a fragment of Saint Anne's arm from the Benedictine monastery in Lyon. A document from the church archive provides us with further details regarding the acquisition of this relic and suggests that the Frankfurt Brotherhood were able to obtain it with the help of merchants from the Netherlands.[24] Fur thermore, the document demonstrates how the concept of a genealogical tree of Saint Anne was a familiar metaphor in Carmelite circles. The author argues that the relic should be transferred to the Carmelite monastery because of the Carmelites' special relationship with the

female ancestors of Christ, and equates Saint Anne with a fruitful tree, 'We judged it to be thus far most worthy… that fruitful tree that produced such abundant and healthy fruit'.

Laupach went to great efforts to promote his confraternity and commissioned Johannes Trithemius, the abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Sponheim, to write a eulogy in praise of Saint Anne. Trithemius's *De Laudibus sanctissime matris Anne* was then followed by a text by Johannes Oudewater that discussed the history of the Order. This text, the *Liber trimerestus de principio et processu ordinis carmelitici*, also mentioned the Frankfurt Brotherhood of Saint Anne, thereby advertising the confraternity throughout the Rhineland and Saxony.[25] Laupach was a central figure in both texts and consequently his confraternity grew very quickly; by 1497, membership had reached 4,000.[26] This is an astonishing number, particularly when we consider that the total population of Frankfurt at this date was only about 10,000.[27] Given the location of the Carmelite church, in the western part of Frankfurt near the trade area in the Römerberg district, it appears that membership numbers were swelled to a great extent by the large number of merchants who visited Frankfurt during the biannual trade fairs held in the spring and autumn. Saint Anne was a popular patron for merchants, as she was seen as a protector of those who undertook hazardous journeys, and several of her supposed miracles concern merchants and shipping.[28] In addition, a number of rich patrician families lived in the area between the Römerberg and the Carmelite monastery, and it seems that they too became members of the Brotherhood.[29] The huge success of the confraternity was clearly a concern for the local clergy, who were anxious that their income was being diverted. Trithemius, in *De Laudibus sanctissime matris Anne*, discusses this potential problem, but defends the Carmelites, stating that townspeople would turn to them only if they were not being taken care of properly by their own parish priests.[30]

The Brotherhood of Saint Anne initially had to share a chapel in the Frankfurt Carmelite church with the Confraternity of Saint George. However, as their numbers grew this was no longer feasible and money was raised by its members to build a dedicated chapel. In 1489, the cardinal legate, Raimund Peraudi, granted a hundred-day indulgence for visits and donations for the construction of the chapel and, on the 3rd April 1494, a new chapel between the choir and transept, next to the sacristy, was consecrated by the archbishop of Mainz.[31] The new Saint Anne chapel, with its important relic, was considered a significant religious site, and documents from the church archive record that the confraternity received further indulgences following the visits of various bishops.[32] This was apparently followed by a visit from the main dignitaries of the Empire, including the Emperor Maximilian and his wife.[33]

The new chapel required an altarpiece, and there is convincing documentary evidence to suggest that the sixteen panels from the wings from a large retable, now preserved in the Historische Museum in Frankfurt, originally came from this chapel (Figures 3.1 and 3.2). An official agreement which discusses mutual rights and duties, dated the 8th September, 1501, between the Brotherhood and the prior of the Carmelite monastery, Philip von Nuyß, makes reference to an altarpiece already situated in the chapel:[34] *'Die kunstlich tafel vff dem altare in der selben capellen und ein monstrantzien zu sant Annen heyltum, alles vß der gemeynen bruderschafft und unser mithulffe… vff gericht'* (The retable from the altar in the same [Saint Anne] chapel and a monstrance containing Saint Anne's relic, all the property of the brotherhood [with] our [the Frankfurt Carmelites] help).[35] Furthermore, in 1867, Phillip Friedrich Gwinner referred to eight panels, painted on both sides and subsequently separated, that featured the Legend of Saint Anne.[36] These he claimed were the wings of a late fifteenth century altarpiece from the Carmelite church, which came into the possession of the town of Frankfurt following the secularisation of church property in 1802–3. According to Koch, Laupach's last will and testament also stated that the prior had honoured the parents of Saint Anne by means of a retable.[37] Although this document is now lost, it gives further support to the hypothesis that the wings were originally from an altarpiece in the monastery church. As Laupach died in 1496, we can assume that the panels must have been commissioned sometime before his death and may have even been in place by 1494.

Figure 3.1 Frankfurt Altarpiece of Saint Anne from the Carmelite Monastery, Interior Wings, Anonymous Flemish Master, c.1495

(Individual Panel Size: 91.5 × 52.5 cm) Historisches Museum, Frankfurt am Main (Photo: Horst Ziegenfusz)

The iconography of the wings provides a fascinating example of how the legend of Saint Anne was linked with the myth of the vision on Mount Carmel to produce a powerful piece of Carmelite propaganda, even though funds to pay for the work must have been raised by the lay confraternity.[38] Each wing is comprised of eight panels, four on the interior and four on the exterior. The complexity of their icono-graphic programme clearly indicates the involvement of a Carmelite theologian or scholar, in all likelihood Rumold von Laupach himself. Although the museum currently attributes the wings to a Flemish master, whom Guy de Tervarent believed was perhaps a successor to Rogier van der Weyden, Gwinner attributed them to a lower German master, and there are stylistic similarities with Cologne painting of a similar period.[39] Unfortunately the middle section of the altarpiece is now lost, although it is assumed that it probably contained a carved shrine, possibly a representation of the Holy Kinship.

Figure 3.2 Frankfurt Altarpiece of Saint Anne From the Carmelite Monastery, Exterior Wings, Anonymous Flemish Master, c.1495

(Individual Panel Size: 91.5 × 52.5 cm) Historisches Museum, Frankfurt am Main (Photo: Horst Ziegenfusz)

The top left panel on the interior of the left wing, clearly appropriates Tree of Jesse iconography in a manner similar to the Tree of Saint Anne images discussed in the previous chapter. Replacing Jesse at the base of the tree in this instance however, is Hismeria, the apocryphal elder sister of Saint Anne, who is richly dressed and identified by an inscription at the foot of her large gothic chair. From her shoulders grow the roots of two branches; in a flower blossom to the viewer's left is her daughter, Saint Elizabeth, with her son John the Baptist directly above her. On the right branch, is Hismeria's son, Eliud, and above him, his son, Eminen. Directly above Hismeria, encircled by tendrils from both branches, sits Eminen's descendant, Saint Servatius. Saint Servatius is dressed as a bishop and, besides a crosier, he holds two silver keys which according to legend were given to him by Saint Peter. As discussed in the previous chapter, Saint Servatius was the fourth-century bishop of Tongeren and archbishop of Maastricht on the Meuse and, as such, was particularly venerated in Germany and the Netherlands. The appropriation of Tree of Jesse iconography in this panel serves not only as a reminder of the extended

genealogy of Saint Anne, but also invokes the prophecy of Isaiah, reinforcing the authority of the whole iconographical programme of the wings.

The neighbouring panel moves on to the main subject of the altar, Saint Anne and her association with the Carmelites. Anne is depicted as a young girl being introduced to the Carmelites on Mount Carmel by her parents, Emerentiana and Stollanus, while a small vignette in the background depicts her birth. The two lower panels continue the story, with the engagement of Anne and Joachim and then the marriage itself.[40] The Marriage of Anne and Joachim takes place in front of a temple portal in the presence of her parents and seems to deliberately reference traditional Marriage of the Virgin iconography. As with the representation of Hismeria, the couple are dressed in rich and elaborate robes, which would resonate with an audience of patricians and wealthy merchants. In addition, Anne wears a crown, which is presumably intended to infer that she, like the Virgin, is descended from King David. This depiction of Saint Anne as a royal ancestor of Christ is relatively unusual, and is a further example of how the Carmelites were prepared to manipulate standard iconography for their own purposes.

The sequence continues on the inner right wing with four scenes from the married life of Anne and Joachim, which Ashley and Sheingorn have suggested may have served as an exemplary model of marriage for the members of the brotherhood.[41] Sev eral well-known episodes from the life of Saint Anne are missing, such as the Rejection of Joachim's Offering, the Annunciation to Anne and Joachim and the Meeting at the Golden Gate. It may be that these scenes were either incorporated in the lost central shrine, or not considered of particular relevance to the iconographic programme of this work, which is fundamentally concerned with promoting the Carmelites and their personal relationship with a saint on whom they had bestowed great power.

The outer wings of the altar illustrate Anne's appearance in visions and the representation of various miracles. On the exterior of the left wing, the first panel refers to a miracle of Eliseus (Elisha), thought to have been one of the original founders of the Carmelite Order.[42] The following depicts Saint Anne among the Carmelites with her children and grandchildren, where the Holy Kinship appears once again in the background, portrayed as an altarpiece that has come to life. Beneath these, the first panel tells the story of the hermit Procopius and how, because of him, Saint Anne came to the aid of the queen of Bohemia during childbirth.[43] The following features the vision of Saint Bridget; Saint Anne appears in the sky in the top right corner of the panel, while Saint Bridget can be seen writing her *Sermo angelicus*, which is being dictated to her by an angel.[44] These sermons, which are devoted to the Virgin, contain the daily readings for Matins and became an essential part of the Birgittine nuns' liturgy. The blessing for the second lesson on Wednesday

refers to Isaiah's prophecy, stating

> This Virgin also is the rod which Isaias foretold would come out of the root of Jesse, prophesying that a flower would spring out of it, upon which the Spirit of God would rest. O ineffable rod! The while it grew within Anne's womb, the pith thereof abode even more gloriously in heaven.[45]

The exterior of the right wing starts with the vision of the prophet Elijah. According to Carmelite tradition, Elijah's vision of a cloud that produced rain, thereby ending a major drought and restoring the fruitfulness of the earth, was seen as a metaphor for the Virgin.[46] In this interpretation, however, we seem to have a conflation of Elijah's vision with that of the hermits on Mount Carmel. Elijah is depicted kneeling before an apparition of Saint Anne, who is seen hovering above the sea in a position of prayer. Above her is the Virgin, floating in a light filled cloud surrounded by four angels; she is shown holding the stem of a blossom that supports the Christ Child. This image can also be interpreted as a subtle reference to the Tree of Jesse: Christ is the beautiful flower of the Carmelite vision and the *flos* of Isaiah's prophecy. In this way the conflation of Elijah's vision with that of the hermits is imbued with the inherent authority of well-established iconography.[47] Like much of the other plant imagery in this work, the lily of the valley growing from the rock in the foreground has obvious Marian connotations.

The following panel features a vision of Saint Anne on an altar, with the figure of the Virgin as a tiny infant in her womb, an image that was often used as an illustration of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, a concept vigorously supported by the Carmelites.[48] God appears at the top of the panel and the words from the Song of Solomon 4:7, '*Tota pulchra es*' are inscribed on a scroll above his head; half figures of David with his harp and Solomon appear either side of Him. David's speech scroll carries a verse from the Book of Psalms 9.36, 'his/her sin shall be sought, and shall not be found'.[49] The inclusion of David and Solomon featured half-length and with scrolls, again evokes a visual tradition that relates back to traditional Tree of Jesse imagery. Beneath the upper panels are scenes from the legend of Saint Colette, who experienced visions of Saint Anne.[50]

It seems clear therefore, that the complex iconography of the sixteen wing panels, commissioned on behalf of the Brotherhood of Saint Anne in Frankfurt, was intended primarily to honour Saint Anne as the mother of the Virgin. In addition, they communicated to the viewer the vital role played by the Carmelites in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy and may have also had a secondary and more subtle function. By highlighting their unique relationship with the female ancestors of Christ, the Carmelites were able to project a

strong identity and advertise the advantages of confraternity membership. The viewer was invited to become associated with an order that Christ's great-grandmother and grandmother had depended on, and established Tree of Jesse iconography was appropriated to help explicate and give authority to this association. Furthermore, although celibate, the Carmelites can also be seen to be actively promoting family life, reassuring current and prospective members that their spiritual needs, and those of their families, would be assiduously taken care of.

Carmelite Imagery in Other Fifteenth-Century Works Dedicated to Saint Anne

Several other works survive which employ similar iconography, yet their origins remain uncertain. Some of these have been associated with Carmelite patronage, while others appear to have a more complicated provenance. Nevertheless, they are an important source of evidence, and a contextual interpretation allows conclusions to be drawn regarding their audience and function.

The first work to be examined is a triptych, now in the Musée d'Histoire de la Médecine in the Université Paris Descartes, which provides another example of how Carmelite imagery, with its clever appropriation of the Tree of Jesse, was used to venerate Saint Anne (Figure 3.3).[51] This work has been dated c.1476–85 and attributed by Max Friedländer to the Master of Saint Gudule, although both the date and attribution remain uncertain and it seems more likely, given the popularity of confraternities of Saint Anne in the 1490s, that the altarpiece was painted at a later date.[52] The main subject of the work is Saint Anne and the matrilineal genealogy of Christ, and the interior of both wings feature tree imagery that is clearly derived from Tree of Jesse iconography.[53] The left wing has a representation of the vision on Mount Carmel; Emerentiana is seen kneeling before four Carmelites. A tree growing from above her breast divides into two branches, whose blooms hold half-figures of Saint Anne and her sister Hismeria. Above them, on the highest branch in a rose blossom, appears the half figure of the Virgin surrounded by a mandorla. Growing from her head is a small twig, which supports an open fruit, out of which steps the naked figure of the Christ Child. Two angels in the corners hold banderols whose inscriptions have many similarities with the prophecy of Isaiah. These read: 'Emerentia, beautiful clean virgin pure, from the offshoot of the tree that will please God, shall come forth a rose, sweet of scent, that will carry the fruit of life' and 'Emerentia, you shall be the root of

the rose tree Anna, which will be trusted, and [of the] rose Maria, praised for her virtues, mother of the fruit Jesus, who will keep everything safe'.[54]

Figure 3.3 The Life and Parents of Saint Anne Triptych, Anonymous Netherlandish Master, c.1476–85

(Size: Centre panel, 113 × 83 cm) Université Paris Descartes, Musée d'Histoire de la Médecine, Paris (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

It has been suggested by Charles Sterling that these inscriptions are in a dialect originally spoken around Maastricht and the Lower Rhine, which could indicate that this was the original location of the altarpiece.[55] However, Geert Claassens, a specialist in Middle Dutch literature, believes that there is no evidence for this supposition, as the limited amount of linguistic material makes a dialectological analysis problematic. Furthermore, from c.1450, Middle Dutch dialects were developing into a more or less common Dutch, which was showing fewer and fewer outspoken regional features. Consequently, there are no dialectic characteristics in these inscriptions that would connect the wording of the text with Maastricht, or even eastern Middle Dutch regions. Nevertheless, the fact that the inscriptions are in the vernacular rather than Latin would suggest that the altarpiece was intended to be seen by a secular audience.

The right wing features the genealogy of Hismeria, who is depicted at the base of the tree with her husband Ephriam, wrongly named here as Eliud.[56] The roots of a tree are suspended above their breasts and above them in blossoms sit their descendants, Eliud and his son Eminen, on the left, and

Elizabeth and John the Baptist, on the right. Crowning the tree is Eminen's descendant, Saint Servatius. At the bottom of the wing, seen kneeling towards the central panel, is the unknown donor, whose black fur almuce indicates that he is a canon. Brandenbarg has suggested that this triptych may be connected directly with Oudewater, whom he claims was a canon of the church at Saint Gudule in Brussels.[57] However, this seems unlikely, as Oudewater joined the Carmelites in 1455 in Mechelen, and as a friar in a mendicant order could not have been a canon, a position that could be held only by a secular or diocesan priest.[58] As Douglas Brine has demonstrated, memorial tablets were a favoured means by which late medieval canons in the Southern Netherlands had themselves commemorated, and these sometimes took the form of triptychs, as in the memorial of Jean Thorion of Saint Omer. It is possible therefore that this work, like some of those mentioned in the previous chapter, could have served such a function.[59] However, the absence of any defining text means that this can only remain a supposition. Even so, the presence of a single patron does suggest that this altarpiece was not commissioned by a confraternity.

The central panel is divided into nine scenes, presented in three rows, designed to be read from left to right, around a traditional *Selbdritt* image of Saint Anne with the Virgin and Christ Child at the centre. The first scene in the uppermost row shows Stollanus and Emerentiana in the countryside, with their two small daughters, Anne and her sister Hismeria. The following scene shows the Rejection of Joachim's Offering, followed by the Meeting of Joachim and Anne at the Golden Gate, with a vignette of the Annunciation to Joachim in the background. The middle row features a young Virgin with her parents, to the left of the central image, and a depiction of Saint Anne, with her second husband, Cleophas and their daughter Mary, on the right. The first scene of the bottom row shows Mary Cleophas with her husband Alpheus and their four children; Saint Anne appears again in the middle scene, with her third husband, Salome, and their daughter, Mary Salome; the final image depicts Mary Salome with her husband, Zebedee, and their children. All the figures in the panels are shown richly dressed and, to avoid any confusion, each is identified with an inscription.

Based purely on the iconography, both Sterling and the current museum catalogue suggest that this altarpiece was commissioned for a Carmelite monastery. However, the main focus of the work is its veneration of Saint Anne, and although the genealogy of Hismeria is similar to that seen on the Frankfurt altarpiece wings, the Carmelite friars feature only in the depiction of the vision on Mount Carmel. The combination of the inscriptions in the vernacular and the rich dress of the holy figures may indicate that the altarpiece was designed to be seen by a wealthy secular audience. However, the presence of the canon donor implies that it was not commissioned by a

Carmelite-administered brotherhood of Saint Anne. The main function of the work is to honour the matrilineal genealogy of Christ, and the juxtaposition of the tree of the vision on Mount Carmel with the family tree of Hismeria, on either side of scenes from the Life of Saint Anne, draws on Tree of Jesse iconography to remind the viewer of the important role played by these sacred figures in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, and of the importance of Saint Anne's family connections.

A small panel, known as the *Virgin of the Carmelites*, dated c.1500 and currently in the Museo Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid, also features the vision of the hermits on Mount Carmel (Figure 3.4). Emerentiana is depicted semi-prostrate in the act of prayer with a tree emerging from behind her back, and her girdle is arranged to give the impression of its roots. The tree has only one branch, which leads to a flower that contains a half-length image of Saint Anne holding the Virgin. A further branch leads from the chest of the Virgin to a blossom that contains the figure of the Christ Child. Witnessing this vision are three kneeling Carmelites, their monastery visible in the background. An angel, to the viewer's left, gestures towards Saint Anne and the Virgin, explaining the vision to the friars with the words '*hec visio ista significat*' (this vision of yours signifies). The hands of the Carmelite friar, next to the tree, are open in astonishment as he comprehends the meaning of what he is seeing.[60] Once again, Emerentiana has replaced Jesse as the root of the tree that is destined to produce the *virga* of Carmel and the *flos* of Christ.[61] The careful positioning of the strawberry plant, on the edge of Emerentiana's robes, directly beneath the vision, is clearly not incidental. The iconography of the strawberry plant, with its trifoliate leaf, has often been linked to the Holy Trinity, and as a member of the rose family, also has obvious Marian connotations. Furthermore, it is depicted here in full flower, just before producing its fruit and, therefore, the association of ideas is evident.[62]

Although this work is rather narrow in its dimensions (99 × 52.5 cm), previous scholarship has assumed that the work was originally the middle part of a triptych, which is supported by the fact that there is some deterioration on the edges of the panel that could have occurred if the wings were removed.[63] If this was the case, then the main focus of the altarpiece would have been the vision of the hermits, a particularly Carmelite image, which would suggest a Carmelite commission. However, it is also possible that this panel was a wing of a larger work, one perhaps dedicated to Saint Anne, which could give it an entirely different provenance.[64] The presence of the canon donor in the Musée d'Histoire de la Médecine triptych, described earlier, suggests that representations of the vision on Mount Carmel were not restricted to Carmelite commissions. It also appears that accounts of the vision were included in non-Carmelite texts, as both Jan van Denemarken, a secular priest,

and Dorlandus, a Carthusian, who wrote Lives of Saint Anne at the end of the fifteenth century, began their works with a description of the vision.[65] Furthermore, some manuscripts entirely devoted to the legend of Emerentiana have been discovered, such as the *Legenda sanctae Emerencianae*, in a collection of Latin hagiographies from the fifteenth century, now in the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels (Ms.4837–44, ff.145–190).[66] It seems entirely possible, therefore, that the Carmelites were so successful in propagating the myth surrounding the early history of their Order that the vision on Mount Carmel, with its attendant imagery, came to be adopted as a standard feature in Saint Anne iconography, regardless of the religious affinity of the donor. This theory is further supported by the existence of some later works, several of which appear to derive from non-Carmelite sources.

Figure 3.4 *The Virgin of the Carmelites*, Painted Panel, Anonymous Flemish Master, c.1500

(Size: 99 × 52.5 cm) © Museo Lázaro Galdiano, Madrid

Carmelite Imagery in Sixteenth-Century Works

Figure 3.5 Two Wings From a Kinship of Saint Anne Polyptych, Attributed to a Follower of Bernard van Orley, c.1528

(Size of each wing: 139 × 70.5 cm) © Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (Photo: J. Geleyns—Art Photography)

Commissions for sixteenth-century works that include the vision on Mount Carmel alongside episodes from the life of Saint Anne appear on the whole to have been placed with Brussels artists. While this may be an accident of survival, it could also be seen as an attempt by some patrons to counter Reformation ideas, which were increasingly finding support in the city.[67] The first example to be considered is found on the dismembered wings of a polyptych dedicated to the Kinship of Saint Anne, now in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, and attributed to a follower of Bernard van Orley (Figure 3.5).[68] The reverse of the left wing features the vision on Mount Carmel; Emerentiana is depicted in a rocky landscape on her knees in prayer, surrounded by a group of Carmelite friars; in the upper part of the panel, three more friars can be seen looking in astonishment at an angel in sky above them. The angel gestures towards a miraculous blossom that seems to emerge from

an ordinary tree; in this blossom stands the naked figure of the Christ Child, holding a globe and surrounded by a mandorla. To the left of the panel in the background, beyond a stream, we can see the house and church of the Carmelites. The reverse of the right wing, which is inscribed with the date 1528, features the subsequent Marriage of Emerentiana and Stollanus, in which Emerentiana can be seen wearing a crown to indicate her royal descent. The front of the left wing features the Rejection of Joachim's Offering, with small scenes in the background depicting the Annunciation to Joachim and the Meeting at the Golden Gate. The right wing depicts the Birth of the Virgin and a small vignette features the Presentation of the Virgin.

The wings were purchased in 1859 from the Sablon church of Notre-Dame in Brussels; however, as the church was closed by the Calvinists in 1581 and worship did not resume until 1803, it seems unlikely that this was the original location of the altar-piece.[69] Yvette Bruijnen has suggested that the wings might have originally come from the Convent of the Great Carmelites in Brussels, which was closed during the French Revolution in 1796, although lack of documentary evidence means this can only be speculation.[70] The missing central panel in all likelihood featured either a Selbdritt or Holy Kinship image and, therefore, it is also conceivable that the work was commissioned by a confraternity or donor with a special devotion to Saint Anne, who may have been unconnected to the Carmelites.

A second altarpiece dedicated to the legend of Saint Anne, also in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, attributed to Jan van Coninxloo and dated 1546, provides more convincing circumstantial evidence that this iconography could be used for non-Carmelite commissions.[71] When open, the central panel of the altarpiece portrays the Holy Kinship in a garden, with small scenes in the background illustrating scenes from the life of Saint Anne. The interior of the left wing features the Rejection of Joachim's Offering; in the background is a depiction of the vision on Mount Carmel. Other background scenes illustrate the Birth of Saint Anne followed by the Marriage of Anne and Joachim, where, once again, Saint Anne wears a crown to indicate her Davidic descent. The interior of the right wing depicts the Death of Saint Anne and, through the windows can be seen two further scenes: Saint Anne in the desert and her funeral procession.

The iconographic programme of this altarpiece is similar to several of the works previously described. What makes it unusual, however, is the subject matter on the exterior of the wings (Figure 3.6). When the altarpiece is closed, Saint Anne can be seen holding the Virgin and Child before a kneeling nun, who is holding a scroll which carries the prayer '*SANTA MATER ANNA ORA PRO ME*' (Holy Mother Anne Pray For Me). The nun is being presented to the holy group by Saint Anthony.[72] As Saint Anthony was one of the major desert

hermits, he was important to the Carmelites, yet the nun does not wear the Carmelite habit of a white mantel over a brown or smoke coloured tunic (depending on the dye), and it is likely that she belonged to another religious community. Prior to 1794, when the altarpiece was seized by the French, this triptych was in the l'eglise des Bogards in Brussels, the church of the Cordeliers, which is a branch of the Franciscans.[73] If the church of the Cordeliers was the original location of the work, the nun could have belonged to the Franciscan Order of the Poor Clares of Saint Colette, who wore a black cloak over a grey tunic and had a special devotion to Saint Anne. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the nun is wearing the habit of the Benedictines, and that the altarpiece may have originally been commissioned for a Benedictine convent.

Figure 3.6 Legend of Saint Anne Triptych, Exterior Wings, Attributed to Jan van Coninxloo II, 1546

(Size of each wing: 114.5 × 74 cm) Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

Several scholars have associated Jan van Coninxloo II with the Benedictine convent of Groot-Bijgaarden in Vorst, now a suburb of Brussels.[74] Surviving double wing panels from a polyptych, originally thought to have come from this convent but now in the parish church of Saint Denis, could also be connected with this artist in some way.[75] When fully closed, the wings depict the Virgin and Child with Anne and Joachim in a semi-interior space.[76] The

first opening shows scenes from the life of the Virgin, and the second and final opening, which would have originally flanked the lost central shrine, has the vision on Mount Carmel on the left (Figure 3.7), with the families of the Virgin's sisters, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, in a meadow on the right.

The portrayal of the vision depicts two events shown simultaneously: in the background, four Carmelite friars greet Emerentiana in front of a church, while, in the foreground, she is asleep in a rocky landscape with five Carmelite friars kneeling in prayer behind her. Emerentiana's head is resting on her right hand, and from her breast grows a tree, a composition reminiscent of contemporaneous representations of a seated Jesse that are discussed further in Chapter Six. This tree has only a single branch, which blossoms into a large red flower that supports a naked Christ Child in a mandorla.[77] The frame is stamped with the Brussels mark and dated 1552, and on the first opening of the wings, a glass pane in the window of the Annunciation scene, contains the coat of arms of Margareta Liederkerke, abbess of Vorst.[78] It is probable,

Figure 3.7 Saint Anne Polyptych, Interior Wing, Anonymous Netherlandish Master, c.1552 (Size of wing: 166 × 84 cm) Church of Saint Denis, Vorst (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

therefore, that the altarpiece was commissioned for the high altar of the

Benedictine abbey church, either by Margareta I van Liederkerke, abbess from 1500 to 1541, or by her niece and successor, Margareta II van Liederkerke, abbess from 1541 to 1560, and that the polyptych was moved to the parish church in 1795, the first year it was not mentioned in the abbey inventory.[79] The missing central panel, or carved shrine, could have featured a representation of Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child, or even a Tree of Saint Anne, which would have completed the iconographical programme of the polyptych.

The fact that an altarpiece intended for a Benedictine altar also included Carmelite imagery may not be particularly surprising, given the previously discussed association between the prior of the Frankfurt Carmelite monastery, Rumold von Laupach, and Johannes Trithemius, the abbot of the Benedictine monastery at Sponheim. Other examples where Carmelite imagery has been used in a Benedictine context can also be found, for instance, in a woodcut affixed into a Latin missal from the Benedictine Abbey of Gembloux, c.1535, now in the Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, Ms.5237, fol.8v (Figure 3.8).[80] Even though it is the Carmelite vision that is depicted, there is a view of Gembloux Abbey with its distinctive belfry in the background, although it is possible that this could have been added at a later date. Similarities between the woodcut and the Vorst panel are obvious and, given the relatively short distance between the two locations, there may be a connection.

It seems apparent that Benedictine patrons were unperturbed by the appearance of Carmelite imagery in their own works of devotion, adopting the legend of the vision on Mount Carmel as part of the wider story of the life of Saint Anne. Other orders have also adopted this imagery, and it can be found on the wings of a spectacular altar-piece commissioned in 1521 by Ruttger Schipmann, prior of the Franciscan church in Dortmund. Now in the protestant Petrikirche, this retable is commonly known as the *Goldene Wunder*, because of its gilded central shrine that contains a detailed story of the Passion.[81] The painted double wings are attributed to Adrian van Overbeck and, closed, depict a large representation of the Mass featuring the pope and emperor, developed from the established iconography of the Mass of Saint Gregory. However, it is with the first opening that we become fully aware of the complexity of the altar's iconographical programme (Figure 3.9). A series of thirty-two individual panels tell the Holy Story, combining scenes from the apocrypha and the Bible. Beginning in the lower left and ending in the upper right, the painted panels are arranged over four rows, with eight panels in each row. The lower row is dedicated to the Legend of Emerentiana; the fourth panel depicts her visit to the hermits on Mount Carmel and the fifth features the Vision.[82]

To summarise, it seems apparent that images played a key role in

establishing and communicating the Carmelite story. The analysis of the iconographic programme of sixteen wing panels, commissioned on behalf of the Brotherhood of Saint Anne in Frankfurt, demonstrates how clever appropriation of Tree of Jesse imagery was used to convey the Carmelites' unique relationship with the matrilineal genealogy of Christ. While the Tree of Hismeria, on the interior of the left wing, is an obvious allusion to the Tree of Jesse motif, the conflation of Elijah's vision with that of the hermits on Mount Carmel is a far more subtle referencing. In this way, the invocation of well established iconography reinforced the myths surrounding the Order's foundation and provided a sense of authority. This helped the Carmelites construct a strong

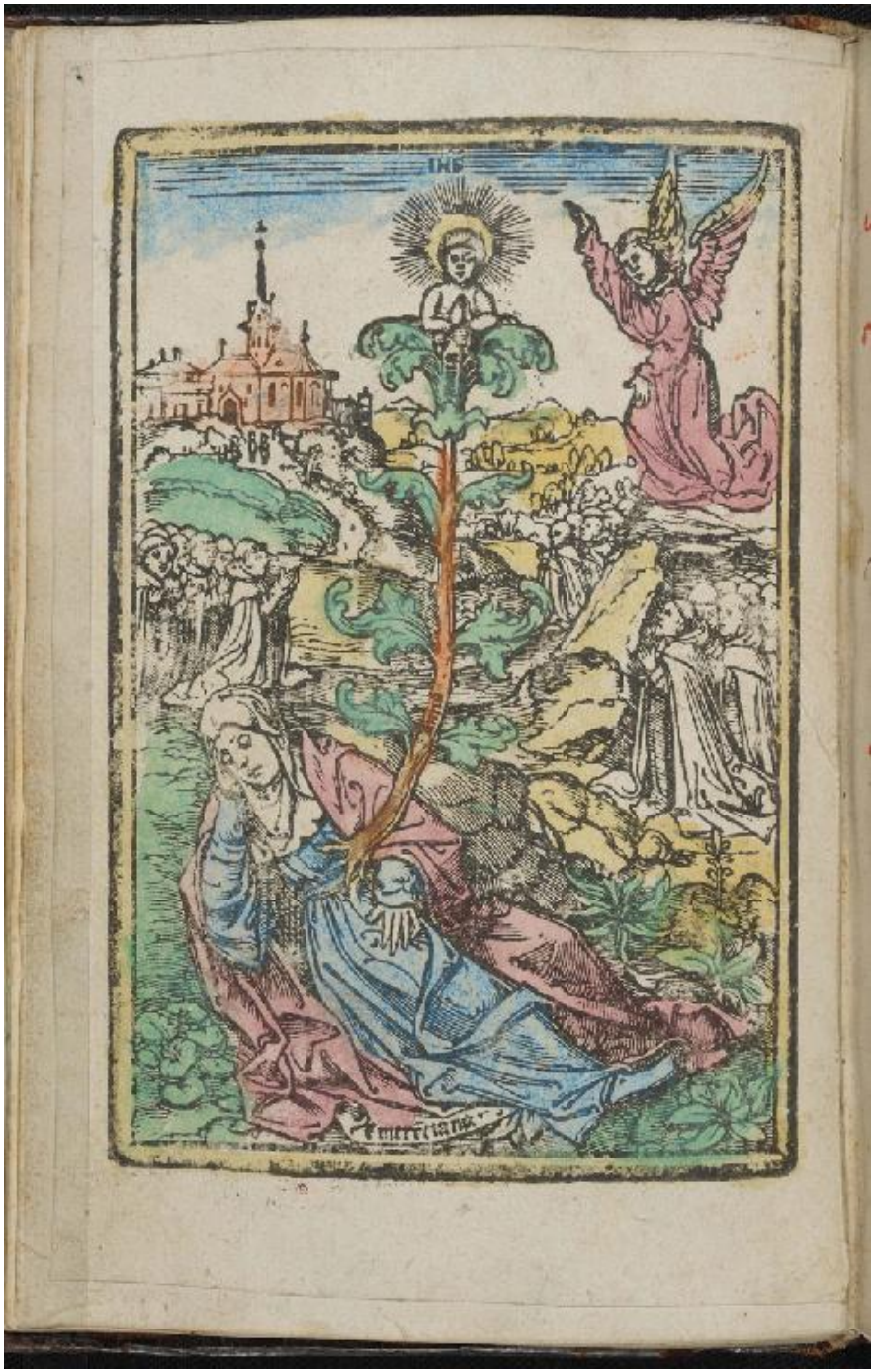


Figure 3.8 *Vision of the Carmelites*, Woodcut From a Latin Missal, From the Benedictine Abbey of Gembloux, c.1535

Royal Library of Belgium, Ms.5237, fol. 8v

identity, one based on an ancient and distinguished heritage. The altarpiece may have also had a secondary function, which was to advertise the advantages of confraternity membership. Members of the brotherhood came from both patrician families and a wealthy merchant class, and the use of rich and elaborate dress for the holy figures may have been a deliberate attempt to connect with this elite social group.

Figure 3.9 The Goldene Wunder Altarpiece, First Opening of Wings, Attributed to Adrian van Overbeck, c.1521

(Size Open: 565 × 749 cm) Saint Petrikirche, Dortmund (Photo: Rüdiger Glahs)

Although their context remains uncertain, there are other works that incorporate this type of Carmelite imagery, and it has been widely assumed that they must also have been commissioned on behalf of Carmelite churches. However, an examination of these works has indicated that their provenance may be less obvious. The account of the vision on Mount Carmel was not restricted to Carmelite texts, and it seems that other religious groups adopted the Carmelites' very specific imagery as part of the wider story of the life of Saint Anne. Support for this theory is provided by several works that incorporate the vision on Mount Carmel yet were evidently linked to non-Carmelite houses. The function of the appropriated Tree of Jesse motif in these works is rather different to those featured in works commissioned on behalf of

the Carmelites. The Carmelites were not the only religious organisation to appropriate Tree of Jesse iconography, and the second part of this chapter will consider how the subject was employed by some of the other orders, particularly the Dominicans.

The Dominicans and Other Religious Orders

While the Carmelites used the Tree of Jesse to demonstrate and endorse their claim to a special relationship with the female ancestors of Christ, the Dominicans, Carthusians and Franciscans employed the subject not only to communicate their own importance to the outside world, but also to engender a sense of communal identity within their own organisations. In addition, it seems that religious groups would borrow certain attributes from each other; this will be explored further in relation to representations of the rosary within Tree of Jesse iconography. In the case of the Dominicans in Frankfurt, it will be argued that their appropriation of the Tree of Jesse can also be seen as a reaction to the activities of the Carmelites in the city.

The Dominicans, sometimes known as the Order of Preachers, had been established in Frankfurt from 1233, based to the east of the Römerberg district, not far from the Carmelite monastery.[83] Their church, one of the most elaborately furnished in Frankfurt, was associated with thirteen confraternities by 1457, and in 1470 a decision was taken to embark on a rebuilding programme.[84] The new choir was completed in 1474 and, sometime before 1500, Hans Holbein the Elder was commissioned to paint an altarpiece to decorate the high altar. It seems that this assignment was considered of such importance that the Augsburg painter actually relocated his workshop while the work was carried out.[85] Although the central shrine is now missing, the primary function of the wings was to honour Christ and the Virgin, and the first opening once depicted eight individual panels featuring scenes from the Passion cycle, with the second and final opening containing scenes from the Life of the Virgin.[86] However, it is when the altarpiece is closed, the view most often seen by the lay audience, that the Frankfurt Dominicans' preoccupation with their status becomes apparent (Figure 3.10).

Both upper and lower panels of the left wing feature a traditional Tree of Jesse, yet mirroring this iconography almost exactly on the right wing, is a tree of the Dominican Order. Jesse sits on his gothic chair with the trunk of a tree growing from his breast, behind him are the standing figures of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, identified by inscriptions. Sitting in blossoms on the branches

of the tree are ten kings; David is shown with his attribute of a harp, and all are identified by inscriptions. A further inscription on the base of the chair refers to Isaiah's prophecy '*EGREDIETVR VIRGA DE RADICE YESSE YSAIE XI C[APITVL]O'*, and crowning the tree are the Virgin and Child. Either side of the Virgin, inscriptions on the painted frame also relate to the prophecy; '*VIRGO DEI GENITRIX'* (the Virgin is the mother of God) and '*VIRGA EST FLOS FILIVS EIVS'* (the flower of the rod is her son). On the right wing, Saint Dominic sits at the base of a tree with a trunk growing from his breast. An inscription identifies him as the founder of his Order: '*S.DOMINICVS ORDINIS PREDICATOR(VM) FV(N)DATOR PRIMVS'*. At the base of his chair, a further inscription relates Isaiah's prophecy to Saint Dominic's legacy; '*FELIX VITIS DE CVIVS SVRCVLO TANTVM GERMEN REDVNDAT SECVLO'*, which can be roughly translated as 'happy is he whose vine abounds so much by the generations from the grafted twig'. In the blossoms of the branches of the tree, also identified by inscriptions, are half figures of a number of prominent but non-related Dominicans, such as Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus. Once again, crowning the tree is the Virgin holding the Christ Child and, inscribed either side of her on the painted frame, are the inscriptions '*VIRGO DEIFERA FLORIDI P[RE]DICATOR[VM]'* (the Virgin inspires lively preaching) and '*ORD[IN]IS SI[N]GVLARIS PATRONA'*, which names her as the patron of the Order.

Figure 3.10 Altarpiece From the Dominican Church in Frankfurt, Exterior of Wings, Hans Holbein the Elder With Assistance From Sigmund Holbein and Leonhard Beck, 1501

(Size: left wing 166.1 × 150 cm, right wing 166.4 × 150.6 cm) Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main (Photo: ARTOTHEK)

There is one main difference between the two representations of the Virgin. A white cloth that appears to be part of her cloak in the Tree of Jesse is being passed to a friar in the tree of the Dominicans. Accompanying this action a speech band reads '*EN HABITVS ORD(IN)IS TVI*' (the habit of your order). The friar receiving the cloth is Master Reginald (c.1180–1220) and the cloth is in fact a scapula, which relates to a legend found in the *Libellus* by Jordon of Saxony, an early account of the origins of the Order.[87] Reginald, Dean of Saint Aignan in Orleans, was allegedly healed by the Virgin from a serious illness in 1218; in a vision he is shown the habit of the Dominicans to indicate that, as an

expression of his gratitude, the Virgin wishes him to join the Order. The purpose of this iconography is clearly to highlight the important role played by Master Reginald in attracting new members in the Order's infancy. However, it also has a secondary meaning: the Blessed Reginald was a doctor of law, teaching in Paris for many years and, consequently, he also serves to show that the Dominicans are on the side of law and orthodoxy.

With so many confraternities based in the Dominican church, there would have been a large secular audience who would have seen the altarpiece on the high altar. The purpose of such an analogy between the Tree of Jesse and the tree of famous Dominican forebears was patently intended to show this audience how important and influential the Order was.[88] The Virgin and Child are not only presented as the flower of the prophecy of Isaiah, but are also seen as the flower of the Dominican tree; and Ambrose's maxim that the Virgin 'is the rod which brings forth the flower, because pure and freely directed to the Lord is her virginity, which is not disturbed by any worldly cares', is still the responsory of Vespers for the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin in the Dominican Rite.[89] The Dominicans are representing themselves as an order with an illustrious and eminent theological tradition, and, like the Carmelites, are claiming a special relationship with the Virgin. Given that the Brotherhood of Saint Anne altarpiece was installed in the new Saint Anne chapel of the Carmelite church sometime between 1494 and 1501, it is perhaps possible to see the choice of the iconography for the Dominican altarpiece as a direct response. The Dominicans, who had traditionally been the preeminent mendicant order in Frankfurt, may have been concerned about the success enjoyed by the Carmelite Brotherhood of Saint Anne, and perhaps felt it necessary to re-establish their authority among the lay community.[90] Furthermore, it seems no coincidence that a triptych dedicated to Saint Anne and the Holy Kinship, now in the Historisches Museum in Frankfurt, was also installed on one of the side altars in the Dominican church in c.1504.[91]

The use of Tree of Jesse iconography for the Dominican altarpiece in Frankfurt was not unique, and other examples can be found where the motif has been juxtaposed with a tree of distinguished members of the Order. For example, wall paintings on the rood screen in the French protestant church in Bern, once the Dominican church, share many similarities with the Frankfurt altarpiece. This church, which was originally part of the Dominican monastery, was built between 1270 and 1285, although the rood screen dates from 1495 (Figure 3.11). The Tree of Jesse appears to the left of the altar and is relatively traditional in its representation. Mirroring this iconography, to the right of the altar, is the Dominican tree. Saint Dominic lies asleep at its base, with blossoms on the branches supporting the busts of both male and female Dominicans, all of whom appear to be identified by inscriptions. At the centre

of the tree, in the largest blossom, is the half figure of the Virgin holding the Christ Child, and again she is handing the white scapular of the Order to Master Reginald. A significant point of departure from the Frankfurt altarpiece, however, is the fact that neither of these wall paintings are fully visible from the nave, indicating that they were designed principally to be seen inside the sacred space. This suggests that the intended audience for the works was not the lay congregation, but the friars themselves.

Figure 3.11 Rood Screen of the Former Dominican Church, c.1495, Bern

(Photo: © Peter Do | Photography)

It seems, therefore, that the appropriation of the Tree of Jesse to portray the spiritual family of the Dominican Order was not used only for display in a public context, and other examples can also be found where the iconography was employed in an entirely private space, for instance at the Dominican Burgkloster in Lübeck.[92] Although this monastery was first established in 1229, building work at the Burgkloster went on into the mid-fifteenth century, with frequent re-buildings and additions.[93] The oldest part of the central building is the impressive Long Hall, which occupies the whole ground floor of the north wing and was used by the friars as a summer refectory. Major restructuring

took place in c.1400; following this, the walls were richly decorated. Although little is now left of this decoration, the subject matter of the wall painting of c.1450, at the eastern end of the south wall, is still just visible (Figure 3.12). Dominican friars are shown with speech bands in the blossoms of green foliage against a red background. Unfortunately, the text on these bands is no longer legible, so it is not known whether the tree was intended to represent famous forebears, or merely contemporary members of the Lübeck community. While there is no evidence that a traditional Tree of Jesse was once juxtaposed with this Dominican tree, the implied association is clear. Furthermore, a carved Tree of Jesse altarpiece, now in the Saint Annen-Museum, once graced the third pillar of the nave in the Burgkloster church.[94] The use of Dominican 'family' trees in areas primarily restricted to the friars indicates that the function of these images was not only to advertise the pre-eminence of the Order to the lay congregation, but also to help create a sense of community among contemporary members of the Order and, in the case of trees of distinguished past members, act as a reminder of their history and tradition.

Figure 3.12 *Tree of the Dominicans*, Wall Painting, c.1450, The Burgkloster, Lübeck

Europäisches Hansemuseum, Lübeck (Photo: Susan Green)

The works discussed so far have all been on a relatively large scale, although there are also instances where the Tree of Jesse was appropriated for smaller works. One such example is a German hand-coloured woodcut dated 1473,

which is now in the British Museum (BM Reg. No. 1872,0608.344) (Figure 3.13).[95] A recumbent Saint Dominic replaces Jesse at the foot of a tree, whose branches support the half figures of fourteen male and two female members of the Order, each named by a scroll. At the top of the tree stands the Virgin with the Christ Child on her arm, handing the white scapula to a member of the Order, although in this instance the recipient is the thirteenth-century Dominican pope, Innocent V. Around Saint

Figure 3.13 *Genealogical Tree of the Dominicans*, Woodcut, 1473

(Size: 41 × 28.7 cm) © Trustees of the British Museum, Reg. No. 1872,0608.344)

Dominic stand six further figures; five can be identified by their halos as saints, while the sixth is crowned with a garland and clutches a rose and a book. This figure represents the well known German Dominican Heinrich Seuse, also

known as Henry Suso (c.1295–1366), who although never canonised was widely regarded as a saintly figure.[96] At the top of the print is the inscription '*Felix vitis de cuius surculo Tantū germē redūdat sclo Celi vinū ppinās. Populo vitali poculo. Ex vbertate palmitū Mundi iam cinxit ambitū*', part of the same Latin rhyme that relates to a play on words associated with vines and shoots that can also be found on the Frankfurt Dominican altarpiece. At the base of the print is a second rhyme: '*Hos peperi natos Quos pdūt esse beatos Signa dei pura Quãvis papalia, iura Nil decreverŕt Quia multos hec latuerunt. Anno. Mcccc lxxiij*'. The abbreviation of some of the words in this rhyme makes it hard to translate and its meaning ambiguous, although it does date the woodcut.[97]

On a smaller and far less expensive scale than altarpieces or frescos, these prints would have not generally been made to order, but produced in large numbers for the open market.[98] Richard Field has estimated that single-sheet woodblocks would yield conservatively at least one hundred impressions, although he believes that this figure could be closer to two hundred, with smaller blocks capable of producing up to one thousand prints.[99] Although these single-sheet images must have been relatively widely available, it is not known exactly who they were made for, or how they would have been used. Some smaller prints have been found pasted into Bibles or Missals, which does give some indication of how their owners might have viewed them, although for larger works, such as this print, which measures 41 × 28.7 cm, their purpose and context is more ambiguous. Nevertheless, it is thought that many devotional prints were produced by monasteries for their own brothers or sisters, and perhaps for occasional sale to their lay congregation or other visitors.[100] If this was the case, then it is possible that this type of Dominican 'family' tree print could have been produced primarily for use in a monastery, and it may have also had a didactic purpose: to help in the instruction of young novices.[101]

It seems evident that, like the Carmelites, the Dominicans appropriated Tree of Jesse iconography as a means of communicating their authority and importance. In the case of the Frankfurt altarpiece, this may have been intended as a retort to the Carmelites, following their success in promoting their Brotherhood of Saint Anne. Other examples suggest that, even though they were not related by blood and were predominantly masculine, Dominican 'family' trees were used within the Order to help foster a sense of common identity and tradition.

Other orders also adopted images of spiritual genealogy as a way of communicating the relationship between different parts or members of their community. For instance, a Carthusian woodcut representing the progression of the Order from Saint Bruno, can be found in the *Statuta ordinis*

cartusisensis, published in Basel in January 1510 (Figure 3.14).[102] As with the Dominican spiritual trees, the founder of the Carthusians is not represented in an abstract or theoretical way, but is shown as the source of the fruitful tree that produced many distinguished members of the Order.[103]

On an entirely different scale, similar iconography can be found on a Netherlandish tapestry, possibly from Brussels, now in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi (Figure 3.15). The source for this imagery was not only derived from the Tree of Jesse, but also had its roots in a treatise written by the thirteenth-century Italian Franciscan, Bonaventure. In his text, the *Tractus qui Lignum vitae dicitur*, the author links a series of

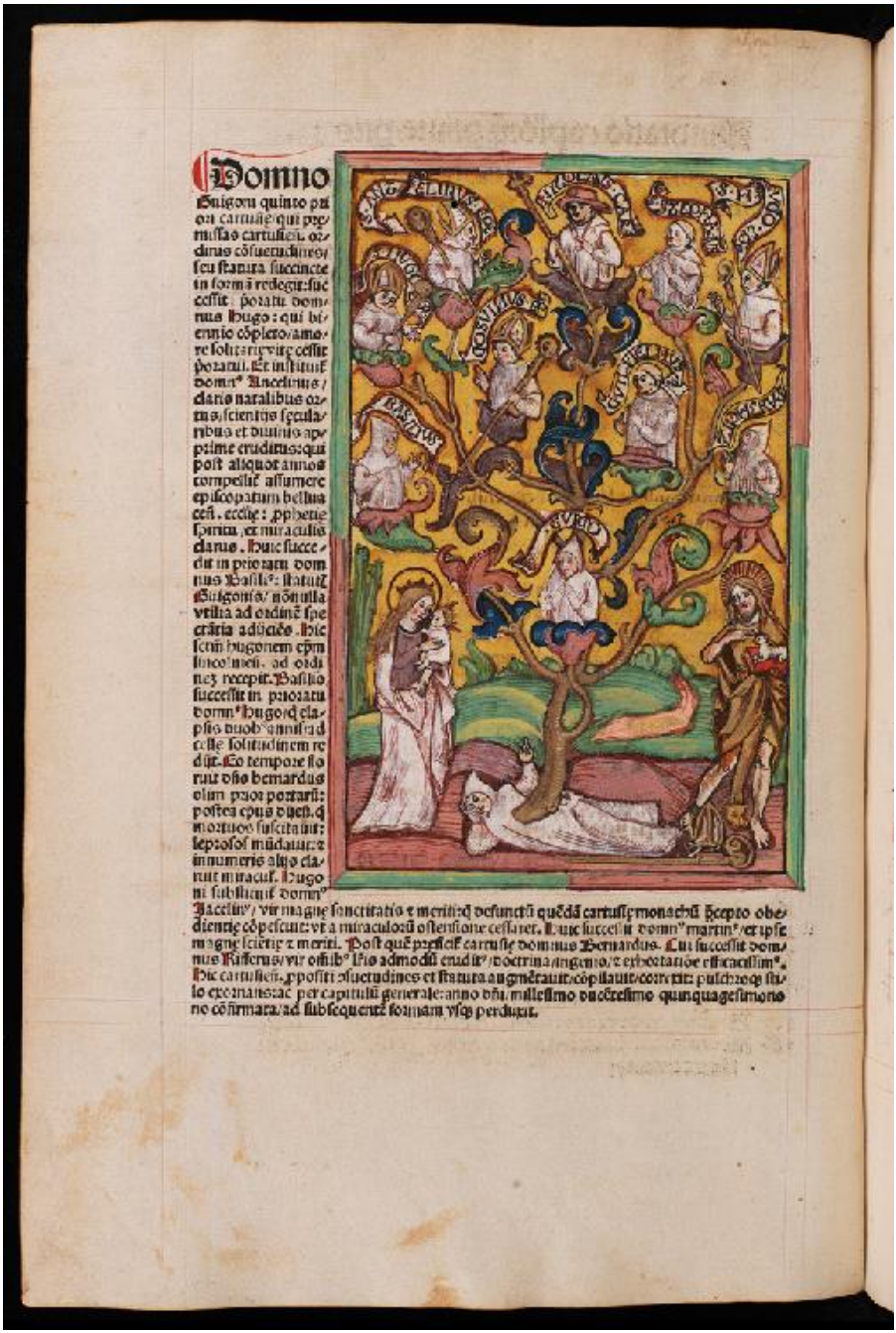


Figure 3.14 *Tree of Saint Bruno and the Carthusian Order*, Woodcut From the *Statuta ordinis cartusisensis*, c.1510

Basel University Library, AK V 3, fol.a1v

Figure 3.15 *Franciscan Tree* Tapestry, Wool and Silk, 1479

(Size: 445 × 333 cm) Foto di Marcello Fedeli, Spoleto—2013, © Archivio fotografico del Sacro Convento di S. Francesco in Assisi, Italia

forty-eight devout meditations on Christ's act of Redemption, with the mystery of the Tree of Life as described by Saint John.[104] Bonaventure envisaged the Cross on which Christ was crucified as a living tree, and many Italian representations of the *Lignum vitae* can be found in Franciscan art of the fourteenth century.[105] The tapestry is divided into two distinct parts, with the lower section depicting five ecclesiastical figures who all appear to wear

the habit of the Franciscan Order underneath their vestments. The central figure is Pope Sixtus IV. He is flanked by two other Franciscan popes, and either side of them are two doctors of the church: Bonaventure and Pietro Auriole. In the upper part of the tapestry, Saint Francis is shown in front of the roots of a tree, receiving the stigmata from the crucified Christ. Above Saint Francis is a baldachin, whose canopy carries the inscription '*TRES ORDINES HIC ORDINAT*' (he established three orders) and, on either side of him, the tree branches out to support six Franciscan saints in flower blossoms, who are all identified by inscriptions. The inclusion of the crucified Christ among the branches of the tree can be seen as a reference to the *Lignum vitae*, and it connects the distinguished members of the Order as the fruits of Christ's passion. Directly above Saint Francis, crowning the tree and encircled by a mandorla, is the half figure of the Virgin carrying the Christ Child.

It is has been suggested that the tapestry was commissioned for the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi by Pope Sixtus IV. Although there is no documentary evidence to support this claim, it is considered a strong possibility.[106] Sixtus IV, born Francesco della Rovere, was a Minister General of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor in 1464, prior to becoming the pope in 1471, and he is known to have made many valuable gifts to the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi. However, it is also possible that the tapestry was woven as a gift for the pope, and that he then subsequently donated it to the Basilica. Whichever was the case, the representation of Sixtus IV in this work is significant; he is presented on the central axis, directly beneath Saint Francis and the Virgin and Christ Child, and beneath his feet are the coat of arms of the della Rovere family with the crossed keys of the papacy. The implication is obvious: Sixtus IV, as Christ's representative on earth, is the heir to Saint Francis. The tapestry can therefore be seen as a powerful piece of papal and Franciscan propaganda, appropriating the established iconography of both the Tree of Jesse and the *Lignum vitae*. It has also been suggested that one of the functions of the tapestry, in the face of internal tensions, was to demonstrate the common origins of the various factions of the Franciscan Order.[107] This work would have been an expensive and exclusive commission, yet it is not known where it would have hung in the Basilica and, therefore, whether the intended audience were the lay congregation or the friars themselves.

The depiction of red and white rosary beads in the right hand of Saint Elzear, the fourteenth-century French Franciscan depicted on the far left of the tapestry, is an unusual addition and demonstrates how iconographic details particular to one order could be used by another to suit their own objectives. Although its origins were much earlier, the cult of the rosary had spread rapidly in the latter quarter of the fifteenth century, following the founding of the first Confraternity of the Rosary in Cologne, in 1475, by the German

Dominican Jacob Sprenger. The Dominicans were great advocates of the cult of the rosary, yet the Franciscans believed that they had precedence in the propagation of devotion to the Virgin.[108] The presence of rosary beads in the tapestry could therefore be seen as an attempt by the Franciscans to defend their primacy over the Dominicans. There are also incidences where the Dominicans have borrowed and adapted Franciscan imagery. This can be seen in a painted panel from the second half of the fifteenth century, thought to have come from the Dominican monastery, but now in the Historiche Museum in Frankfurt (Figure 3.16).[109] Attributed to a southern German master, the iconography is derived from the *Lignum vitae*, yet the branches and fruit of the tree are expressly characterised as a rose bush. Saint Dominic is represented with another friar at the base of the tree, and both figures hold rosary beads in their hands. This image reflects the traditionally held

Figure 3.16 *Tree of Life*, Painted Panel, Attributed to a Southern German Master, c.1450–1500

(Size: 138 × 113 cm) Historisches Museum, Frankfurt am Main (Photo: Horst Ziegenfusz)

belief that Saint Dominic was the creator of the prayers of the rosary, and implies that the contemplation of Christ's act of Redemption, encouraged by the Franciscans, could also be considered within the context of the Marian devotion of the rosary, promoted by the Dominicans.

In addition, it is not uncommon to find references to the cult of the rosary in Tree of Jesse images related to other religious groups. For example, it forms an integral part of the iconography of a painted panel in the collection of Rijksmuseum, attributed to the circle of the Haarlem based painter Geertgen tot

Sint Jans (Figure 3.17).[110] Jesse lies asleep on the grass in a walled courtyard, at the base of a tree that supports various descendants on its branches. Crowning the tree is a seated Virgin with the Christ Child in her arms, accompanied by two angels. One of the kings in the tree, seen from the back, is wearing both a crown and a garland of roses on his head, and another rose garland over his shoulder; a second king is wearing rosary beads around his neck. In the top right of the panel, we can see what appears to be part of a monastic house and church, and the removal of over-painting, during restoration in 1932, revealed the kneeling nun in the bottom left corner, who appears to be very young and also has a rosary dangling from her forearm. Behind the nun stands a man leaning on a staff, with a pilgrim's scrip hanging from his belt.

The first Netherlandish Confraternity of the Rosary was founded in Haarlem in 1478, and it seems that three other paintings by Geertgen tot Sint Jans, or his workshop, are explicitly connected with the veneration of the Virgin through the rosary.[111] Although it has not been possible to positively identify the convent in this panel, the nun's white habit has led to the suggestion that she could be from the Cistercian Convent of Saint Mary Magdalene in Haarlem, also known as the Whiteladies Convent. Friedländer has also proposed that she might be a nun from the Convent of the Poor Clares in Amsterdam, although the Poor Clares wore a black cloak over a grey habit.[112] An alternative suggestion is that this work is a memorial panel, perhaps commissioned by the individualised male figure in contemporary dress with an open book on the right of the image.[113] If this is the case, then the kneeling nun may in fact be a representation of his dead daughter or some other female relative, and the painting may reflect the donor's particular devotion to the rosary. Another possibility is that the nun's white habit may indicate that she came from a Norbertine Convent, whose canonesses still wear the all white habit of their Order.

The Norbertines, also known as the Premonstratensians, are an order of canons regular that are associated with another composition that includes a reference to the rosary (Figure 3.18). This little-known triptych, which combines the themes of the Holy Kinship with the Tree of Jesse, is currently in the Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Goede Wil church, in Maria-ter-Heide on the outskirts of Antwerp. However, it was not installed in the church of Maria-ter-Heide until 1854, and it seems probable, following the discovery of documents in the archives of the Norbertine Abbey of Tongerloo, that the triptych was originally commissioned for the Abbey in the early sixteenth century.[114] This is supported by the identification of the Abbey's coat of arms on the staff of the kneeling donor on the left wing, who is thought to be the Abbot of the day, Antonius Tsgrooten, shown with his mitre.[115]

The central part of the triptych features the family of Saint Anne

surrounding a single shoot. This rises up to support a crescent moon, which in turn supports the Virgin and Child.[116] Beneath the Virgin's feet is a landscape, which appears to include

Figure 3.17 *Tree of Jesse*, Painted Panel, Attributed to Circle of Geertgen tot Sint Jans, c.1485–95

(Size: 89.8 × 60.6 cm) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

a monastic complex, presumably the Abbey of Tongerloo. The interior of the left wing features a representation of the Tree of Jesse, and the right wing has a tree of Hismeria in which Saint Anne's sister can be clearly seen holding rosary beads.

Figure 3.18 The Legend of Saint Anne Triptych, c.1513–15

(Size: Centre Panel, 221 × 148 cm) Onze-Lieve-Vrouw van Goede Wil, Maria-ter-Heide, Brasschaat (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

It is apparent, therefore, that it was not only the Carmelites and Dominicans who appropriated Tree of Jesse iconography. The Carthusians and Franciscans also used it to create spiritual family trees that established their authority and helped engender a sense of community and tradition. In other instances, the incorporation of different attributes, such as rosary beads, demonstrates how these religious groups would borrow iconographic elements from each other in an attempt to present themselves to their audience in the most devout and righteous way possible.

Conclusion

The first part of this chapter examined how the Carmelites invoked Tree of Jesse iconography in order to help create a strong identity, one based on an ancient and distinguished heritage. The analysis of sixteen wing panels commissioned for the Brotherhood of Saint Anne in Frankfurt, demonstrates how skilful appropriation of the motif was used to communicate the Carmelites' unique relationship with the matrilineal family of Christ. By relying on their audience's inherent understanding of the subject, the Carmelites were thus able to use well established Tree of Jesse iconography to reinforce the myths surrounding their Order's foundation. The question of audience was also considered, and it was proposed that, by highlighting the Carmelites' role in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, the altarpiece may have been deliberately designed to advertise the benefits of confraternity membership. The viewer was invited to become associated with an order Christ's great-grandmother and grandmother had depended on. The elaborate dress of the holy figures could then be seen as an attempt to resonate with the rich patricians and wealthy merchants, who made up the Brotherhood's existing and future sponsors.

It is commonly assumed that other works to incorporate these particular forms of Carmelite imagery must have also been commissioned on behalf of Carmelite churches. However, closer examination of the overall iconography of these works suggests that, for some, their provenance may be more complex. The account of the vision on Mount Carmel was not restricted to Carmelite texts, and it seems that Carmelite imagery may have been adopted by other religious groups as part of the wider story of the life of Saint Anne. Support for this hypothesis was provided by several later works that were evidently linked to non-Carmelite houses. The function of the motif in these works, therefore, differed to the function of the motif in specifically Carmelite commissions, and their audience would have a different perception of the iconography.

The Carmelites were not the only religious group to appropriate the Tree of Jesse, and the second part of this chapter demonstrated how the subject was employed across a range of media by the Dominicans and other orders. Analysis of the iconography of the exterior wings from an altarpiece once on the high altar of the Dominican church in Frankfurt showed how the Order used an analogy between the Tree of Jesse and a tree of distinguished past members to demonstrate their illustrious theological tradition. As the Frankfurt Dominican church housed a number of con-fraternities, it would have received a large number of lay visitors and, consequently, this altarpiece could be seen as an attempt to re-establish the Dominicans' authority and superiority in the face of increasing Carmelite activity in the city. Other examples were discussed where the Tree of Jesse was appropriated by the Dominicans to portray their spiritual family in an entirely private space,

perhaps intended to help nurture a sense of tradition, community and belonging. On a different scale, the use of the motif in Dominican prints was also investigated, and it seems that the audience for these works may have predominantly come from within the religious community. If this was the case, then these prints may have had a didactic as well as devotional function.

Other orders also adopted imagery of a spiritual genealogy as a means of communicating the relationship between different elements of their community. This is most clearly demonstrated by the examination of the Franciscan Tree tapestry in the Basilica of Saint Francis in Assisi, which appropriated the established iconography of both the Tree of Jesse and the Franciscan tradition of the *Lignum vitae*. It has been proposed that one of the functions of this work was to demonstrate the common origins of the different factions of the Order in the face of internal tensions, although whether the tapestry was intended for display in a public or private context is unknown. The presence of rosary beads in this work provided an example of how religious groups would sometimes borrow different iconographic attributes from each other, so as to present themselves to a contemporary audience in the most favourable light possible. This was briefly examined further in relation to works commissioned on behalf of other orders.

It seems evident that many of the religious orders exploited Tree of Jesse iconography in their efforts to project a distinguished and eminent tradition. By associating themselves with Isaiah's prophecy, they hoped to promote their particular claim not only to theological prominence, but also to a special relationship with Christ and the Virgin. The Tree of Jesse could also be used as a metaphor to describe different kinds of community, spiritual as well as genealogical; in other instances, the motif could be adapted to help engender a sense of common identity. The Tree of Jesse was, therefore, a very useful template for religious orders, one whose inherent meaning could be augmented to reflect their own particular philosophy. The following chapter will consider how the Tree of Jesse was also appropriated by other patrons, preoccupied by dynastic aspirations and different earthly objectives, and it will focus on the function of an image once on the altar of a little-known healing shrine in the Odenwald district of Germany.

Notes

1. For Carmelite settlements in Germany see Heinrich Hubert Koch, *Die Karmelitenklöster, der Niederdeutschen Provinz, 13 bis 16 Jahrhundert* (Freibug im Breisgau 1889). For the Saint Anne Brotherhoods, see Angelika Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in

Bruderschaften', in *Die Verehrung der heiligen Anna*, 82–85.

2. See Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *L'ombre des ancêtres, essai sur l'imaginaire médiéval de la parenté* (Paris: Fayard, 2000) and Dominique Donadieu-Rigaut, *Penser en Images Les Ordres Religieux XIIe–XVe Siècles* (Paris: Arguments, 2005) for a further discussion of images of the religious orders.

3. 4 Kings 1:10. Frances Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 7–42, discusses the history of the order in some detail.

4. Koch, *Die Karmelitenklöster, der Niederdeutschen Provinz*, 27.

5. Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 25.

6. Many historians deny the existence of the Carmelite Order prior to the twelfth century, when hermit monks were first recorded on Mount Carmel.

7. Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 21. Some calendars have Saint Anne's feast day as the 25th July.

8. The primary works by Bostius were the *'De illustribus viris ordinis beatissime virginis Mariae de monte Carmelo*' (1475), the *'Breviloquim tripartitum de institutione, intitulatione et confirmation ordinis'* (before 1484), a treatise on the Marian devotion of the order, '*De patronatu et patrocinio beatissime Virginis Mariae'* (1479), and the *'Speculum Historiale'* (before 1491). See Andrew Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity, Mendicants and their Pasts in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 212. Bostius' *'De illustribus viris'* is the only composition available in a modern edition. Many humanists from Germany supported devotion to Saint Anne, Trithemius, for example, names Jodocus Badius, Rudolf Agricola, Conrad Celtis, Jodocus Beissel and Werner von Themar, who were all, to one degree or another, implicated in the German humanist movement. See Noel L. Brann, *The Abbot Trithemius (1462–1516), The Renaissance of Monastic Humanism* (Leiden: Brill, 1981) 178–179.

9. It was probably during his visit to the Collège Montaigu in Paris that Erasmus, at Bostius's request, wrote a poem in honour of Saint Anne. Erasmus later dedicated this poem to Anne of Borsselen. For a discussion of the relationship between Bostius and Erasmus see P. Benoit-Marie de la Croix, 'Les Carmes Humanistes (Environ 1465 jusque 1525)', *Etudes Carmélitaines*, Vol. 20 (1934), 38–39.

10. Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, 227. According to Carmelite tradition, the account of the vision on Mount Carmel derives from Cyril of Alexandria, who supposedly recorded the lineage of Saint Anne following the Council of Ephesus. See Bruno Borchert, O.Carm, 'L'iconographie du Carmel', *Carmelus*, Vol. 2 (1955), 97–98.

11. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne, A Holy Grandmother and Her Children', 45.

12. Brandenbarg, 'St Anne and her Family', 101. Some contemporary authors seem to have embellished the story even further: by tracing the prophetic line from Elijah to John the Baptist they maintained that several key Old Testament figures could also be called Carmelites. See Jotischky, *The Carmelites and Antiquity*, 219–223.

13. *Piissima Domina… ego credo et confiteor, quia tu ex radice Jesse virga pulcherrima, at per hoc omne quod te aliquatenus decoloraret peccati vulnere aliena prodisti et integerrima permanens florem speciossimum protulisti, non qualemcumque sed super quem septiformis spiritus requievit… per quem florem a peccato primi hominis liberamur.* Transcribed in

Borchert, 'L'iconographie du Carmel', 88.

14. Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 52.

15. Described by Margaret Rickert, *The Reconstructed Carmelite Missal* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 113–114.

16. For a general discussion of confraternities in the later Middle Ages see Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock eds., *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Reinhard Strohm, 'Convents and Confraternities', in *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 60–73, and Andrews, *The Other Friars*, 32. For a discussion of the structure and funding of confraternities, see Paul Trio, 'The Social Positioning of Late Medieval Confraternities in Urbanized Flanders: from Integration to Segregation', in Monika Escher-Apsner ed., *Medieval Confraternities in European Towns: function, forms, protagonists* (Frankfurt and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), 99–110 and, Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in Bruderschaften', 109–111.

17. Nixon investigated how the Carmelites in Augsburg offered indulgences in return for gifts to the Brotherhood of Saint Anne, and promoted the confraternity by stating that the good works of the Order would help members gain entrance to the kingdom of heaven. See Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 44–45.

18. Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in Bruderschaften', 82–85. Although Döfler-Dierken also makes the point that it is sometime difficult to verify the existence of these brotherhoods, as they are often mentioned in documents only when they are beneficiaries of an endowment.

19. Nixon, 'Economic Factors and the Cult of Saint Anne', in *Mary's Mother*, 81–98.

20. Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in Bruderschaften', 85.

21. A Carmelite settlement was first established in Frankfurt in 1270, although most of the current church, now the archaeological museum, dates back to the fifteenth century. See Koch, *Die Karmelitenklöster, der Niederdeutschen Provinz*, 38–39.

22. Heinrich Hubert Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main, 13 bis 16 Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt: Heil, 1912), 31.

23. The original documents from the church archives are transcribed in Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 81–82 and 86–88.

24. This document is transcribed in Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 83–86.

25. Kurt Köster, 'Pilgerzeichen und Wallsfahrtplaketten von St. Adrian in Geraardsbergen', in Ernst Holzinger and Herbert Beck eds., *Städel-Jahrbuch*, Vol. 4. (Munich: Prestel, 1973), 106.

26. See Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in Bruderschaften', 84.

27. The population of Frankfurt at the end of the fifteenth century is taken from Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 39.

28. One of the most valuable donations to be made to the Frankfurt Brotherhood was by a merchant from Antwerp, who in 1487 gave 850 florins for a daily mass to be read in the chapel. See Andreas Hansert, in Wolfgang P. Cillessen ed., *Der Annenaltar Des Meisters Von Frankfurt*, Historisches Museum (Frankfurt: Henrich, 2012), 52.

29. See Kurt Wettengl, *Frankfurt in the Late Middle Ages*, Exh. Cat., No. 45. (Frankfurt am Main: Historisches Museum, 1999).

30. Döfler-Dierken, 'Annenverehrung in Bruderschaften', 86.

31. See Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 24–25.

32. See the original documents transcribed in Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 88–90.

33. This is taken from page 13 of the transcript of a lecture given by Angelika Döfler-Dierken at the Historisches Museum in Frankfurt on the 11th September, 1996.

34. This document can be found in the Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Altes Archiv (Karmeliter Urkunden Nr. 201), Frankfurt am Main.

35. Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 69, discusses how the word '*tafel*' in this context does not necessarily mean a single panel, but was also used to describe a large altarpiece.

36. Phillip Friedrich Gwinner, *Zusätze und Berichtigungen zu Kunst und Künstler in Frankfurt am Main von dreizehnten Jahrhundert bis zur Eröffnung des Städel'schen Kunstinstituts* (Frankfurt am Main: J. Baer, 1867), 135–136:

> *Zu den aus den säcularisirten Klöstern stammenden, in den Besiß der Stadt Frankfurt gelangten Oelgemälden gehören auch sechszehn, auf die Legende der heil. Anna bezügliche Bilder eines guten niederdeutschen Meisters. Dieselben waren ursprünglich auf acht Tafeln zu beiden Seiten gemalt, scheinen demnach die Flügel eines größeren Altars gebildet zu haben. Der vormalige Fürst Primas von Frankfurt ließ sie auseinander sägen. Sie befanden sich in dem Karmelitenkloster und wurden wahrscheinlich in dem leßten Viertel des 15 Jahrhunderts durch den gelehrten, um das Kloster, wie überhaupt um dem Orden sehr verdienten Prior Romuld von Laupach gestiftet.*

37. Koch, *Das Karmelitenklöster in Frankfurt am Main*, 70.

38. These panels have recently been re-arranged to their current position following a physical examination of the saw marks that originally divided them.

39. Guy de Tervarent, *Les énigmas de l'art du Moyen Age* (*2nd series), Art Flamand* (Paris: Les É ditions d'art et d'histoire, 1941), 35–46.

40. In the first of these two panels, the background landscape features demons murdering young men, which relates to an extension of the legend of Emerentiana, where six suitors, rejected for their carnal desires, are taken by devils before the devout Stollanus is finally chosen. A similar story appears in the Old Testament relating to the marriage of Sarah and Tobias, Book of Tobias, Chapter 6:14.

41. Ashley and Sheingorn, *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 30. The first panel depicts Joachim and Saint Anne giving thanks, which may derive from the narrative in chapter three of the Pseudo Matthew, where, following the appearance of the angel to Joachim in the wilderness, the angel instructs him to offer up a sacrifice to God. In this representation however, not only is Anne present, but also the offering takes place in the temple. The following scene features Joachim and Saint Anne offering alms to the poor. The lower left panel shows Joachim and Saint Anne sharing a meal, while a vignette in the background features the Birth of the Virgin. The lower right panel portrays the Presentation of the Virgin; here the Virgin is represented twice, at the bottom of the stairs accompanied by an angel and again at the top being received by the high priest.

42. 4 Kings 4: 38–41.

43. While digging a well Procopius discovered a gold necklace and asked the King of Hungary if it could be made into coins bearing the image of Saint Anne. The first coin was given to the queen. One day, when alone in the woods, she went into labour. Saint Anne came to the aid of the queen and she gave birth without difficulty. The king then rewarded Procopius by making him an archbishop, and Procopius in turn built churches, chapels and monasteries in honour of Saint Anne.

44. For the story of the life of Saint Bridget see Morris, *St Birgitta of Sweden*.

45. Graf, *Revelations and Prayers of Saint Bridget of Sweden. Being the 'Sermo Angelicus'*, 33–35.

46. 3 Kings 18:42–45:

> and Elias went up to the top of Carmel, and casting himself down upon the earth put his face between his knees… a little cloud arose out of the sea like a man's foot…. and wind, and there fell a great rain.

47. A painting depicting the Legend of Saint Anne in the treasury museum of the Sint Salvatorskathedraal in Bruges, attributed to an anonymous Netherlandish master and dated c.1525, also conflates the vision of Elijah with that of the hermits on Mount Carmel. For further information see Tervarent, *Les Enigmas de L'Art du Moyen Age*, 31–33, and Devliegher, 'De Sint-Salvatorskatedraal te Brugge Inventaris', 174–175.

48. It has been suggested by Ashley and Sheingorn that the panel may actually represent an illustration of the hymn for the feast, where the authorities are called upon to give their opinion as to the truth of the doctrine. See *Interpreting Cultural Symbols*, 35.

49. '*Quaeretur peccatum illius et non invenietur'*. As Vloberg identified, the Latin word *illius* can be taken as either masculine or feminine. He suggests that as it clearly refers to the Virgin then we should read it as feminine in this context. See Vloberg, 'The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception', 466.

50. In the first, Saint Anne introduces her descendants as a vindication of her three marriages and, in the second, Colette is seen praying before an altarpiece of the Holy Kinship; an apparition in the sky shows Saint Anne soliciting prayers from the saints on her behalf. The *Life of Saint Colette* was written by her confessor; she was born in Corbie in 1381 and reformed the order of Poor Clares, dying in Ghent in 1447. A confraternity of Saint Anne existed in the church of Saint Nicholas in Ghent from 1445. For further details see Elizabeth Dhanens, 'Een "Maagschap van de H. Anna" in Het Derde Kwart van de 15de Eeuw?', *Academiae Analecta, Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België*, Jaargang 48, No. 2 (1987), 115–126.

51. The altar was donated to the museum by Professor Gilbert in 1927. For further details see Marc Fumaroli, Marie-Véronique Clin et al., *Le Corps Mécène, Chefs-d'Oeuvre de l'université René Descartes* (Paris: Association des Amis du Musée, 2005, 62–79.

52. Max Friedländer, 'Die Brüsseler Tafel-Malerei Gegen Den Ausgang des 15. Jahrhunderts', in Paul Clemen ed., *Belgische Kunstdenkmäler* (Munich: Bruckmann, 1923), 319–320. Charles Sterling, who dated the work based on the style of dress, has also suggested that it might be attributed to the circle of Dirk Bouts. Charles Sterling, *Exposition des Collections Artistiques de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris* (Paris:1935), 5.

53. Unfortunately nothing remains of the paint surface on the exterior of the wings.

54. '*Emerencia scoe[n] zuuer maeghet puere, Vten groysel des boems die god behagen zal, Sal spruten een Roose zoet van geurere, Die de vrucht des leues dragen zal'* and *'Emerencia ghy zult de wortel wesen, des Roesboems anna die men betrouwen za[l], Ende roose maria in deugden gepresen, Moeder der vrucht Jhesus die al behouwen zal'*. I am grateful to Geert Claassens, Professor of Middle Dutch literature at Leuven University, for his help in transcribing and translating these texts.

55. Sterling, *Exposition des Collections Artistiques de la Faculté de Médecine de Paris*, 5. Sterling also suggests that the presence of plain halos, an iconographic detail he believed was particular to Cologne painters, may indicate that both the work and the donor came from this area.

56. This error may be due to incorrect restoration, although the area taken up by the inscription does not look spacious enough for a longer name and could have been an original mistake. Elsewhere however, Hismeria's husband is named as Affra, which could have been changed to Eliud at a later date. Richard Copsey O.Carm, '*The Life of St. Anne By an Unknown Flemish Carmelite*', 4, To date unpublished.

57. Brandenbarg, 'St Anne and her Family', 120.

58. From 1495 Oudewater was in Germany, first as sub prior at Kassel and then as prior in Gerardsbergen and sub prior in Frankfurt. He returned to Mechelen in June 1503 and died there at the age of seventy-four. I am grateful to Richard Copsey O. Carm for supplying these details.

59. Brine, *Pious Memories*, 105–108.

60. Ewald Maria Vetter has suggested that the placing of his hands, as if they are about to grasp the calyx, may be seen as a deliberate reference to the chalice and therefore to the Eucharist. See Vetter, 'La Tabla de los Carmelitas del Museo Lázaro Galdiano', *Goya: Revista de Arte*, No. 47 (Madrid, 1962), 334.

61. Vetter proposes that the position of Emerentiana on the ground may also be a reference to her humility and the humility of the Virgin. Vetter, 'La Tabla de los Carmelitas', 333–334.

62. See Celia Fisher, *Flowers of the Renaissance* (London: Frances Lincoln Ltd, 2011), 149–151 and Celia Fisher, *The Medieval Flower Book* (London: British Library, 2013), 114.

63. Vetter, 'La Tabla de los Carmelitas', 337.

64. Despite stylistic differences, certain similarities between the Madrid panel and the left wing of the Paris triptych have lead Vetter to suggest that, if Friedländer is correct about the previous attribution, this might also be a work of the Master of Saint Gudule. Vetter, 'La Tabla de los Carmelitas', 337. An attribution to Bouts has also been proposed by José Lázaro y Galdiano, in *La colección Lazaro de Madrid*, Vol. 2 (Madrid: La Espana moderna, 1926), 460.

65. Brandenbarg, 'St Anne and Her Family', 105–112. In Dorlandus' '*Historie van sinte Anna moeder Marie'* we encounter a new variant: the tree has a beautiful branch with three twigs, representing the three daughters produced by Saint Anne's three marriages. Denemarken's texts contain two alternative readings of the Carmelite vision. In the first, '*Die historie, die gheliden ende die exemplen vander heyliger vrouwen Sint Annen*', Anne is born before Hismeria. This is reversed in '*Die historie van Sint Anna*'; in this description of the vision the hermits see a beautiful branch with many leaves and fruit, once the fruit has been gathered the tree withers, although another beautiful fruit then grows from the dried branch. This is surrounded by a celestial light and a voice from heaven announces that

Emerentiana will bear another daughter. Only when Emerentiana is sixty-one is this promise finally fulfilled, implying that Anne is immaculately conceived. This latter version of the vision appears in a Life of Saint Anne that was copied by the English Carmelite John Bale during a visit to the Netherlands in the early sixteenth century (British Library, Ms. Harley 1819, ff.17–40). See Richard Copsey O.Carm, '*The Life of St. Anne by an Unknown Flemish Carmelite*'.

66. This manuscript was in a Leuven monastery until 1791. For a full description see Joseph van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothéque Royale de Belgique*, Vol. V (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1905), 119–120.

67. For a discussion of the spread of Lutheranism and Calvinism in Brussels see Alistair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London and New York: Hambledon and London, 2003).

68. Alexandre Galand, *The Flemish Primitives VI, The Bernard van Orley Group*, *Catalogue of early Netherlandish Painting in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 340–357. These wings have also been attributed to the Master of Saint Michael. See Yvette Bruijnen, 'The Master of Saint Michael: A Newly Established Group of Paintings By an Artist in the Orbit of Bernard van Orley', *Oud Holland*, 115, No. 2 (2001/2), 79–110.

69. It may be significant that a later painting, which features an abbreviated Tree of Saint Anne, still hangs high on the north wall of the side aisle of the Sablon church.

70. Bruijnen, 'The Master of Saint Michael', 104.

71. The interior of the right wing, which features the Death of Saint Anne, has a cartouche above the bed containing the inscription 'JAN VAN CONIXLO 1546'.

72. Barely visible on the wall behind Saint Anthony are the shadows of a pig and a bell, two of his attributes.

73. Henri Pauwels ed., *Catalogue inventaire de la peinture ancienne*, Musé es Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (Brussels: Les Musées, 1984), 64.

74. Jeanne Maquet-Tombu in her article 'Une Oeuvre Inédite de Jan van Coninxlo', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, Vol. VI (1931), 148–159, was one of the first to establish a link between this convent and the works of Jan van Coninxloo II.

75. Frank van der Ploeg, in his article 'Jan II van Coninxloo en zijn werkzaamheden voor het benedictinessenklooster van Groot-Bijgaardenbij Brussel', *Oud Holland*, Vol. 112, No. 2/3 (1998), 104–126, discusses the discovery of two books in the archive of the convent which record payments made by the prioresses. These documents list a separate item for painting and polychromy work, and it is here that the name Jan van Coninxloo appears in connection with a sum paid for painting the side panels of the main altar. Whether these are the Saint Denis wings is uncertain.

76. Maquet-Tombu in 'Une Oeuvre Inédite de Jan van Coninxlo' and, Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne in 'Etude Iconographique, Le Polyptyque de Forest et les volets de saint-Benoit de Bruxelles', *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium*, Vol. 12 (1970), 134–154, have identified the male figure as Joseph, particularly as he seems to be drilling a hole into a wooden plank resting on the floor. However, this is unlikely as Joseph is shown as a much older man in the scenes of the Nativity and the Adoration of the Kings. Furthermore, his dress, although consistent in the other representations, is different here, and therefore it is more likely that the male figure is

intended to represent Joachim.

77. Both Maquet-Tombu and Lafontaine-Dosogne have identified the seated figure as Saint Anne, although this seems unlikely as she is dressed in the same blue robe as Emerentiana greeting the friars in the upper part of the panel. Furthermore, Anne is dressed in a brown robe on the exterior view of the wings.

78. The coat of arms were identified by Maquet-Tombu in 'Une Oeuvre Inédite de Jan van Coninxlo', 156.

79. Véronique Bücken, 'Veelluik van de Heilige Anna en de Kindsheid van Jezus', in Bart Franzen ed., *De Heilige Alena verering en verbeelding; gids voor een bezoek aan de Sint-Denijskerk van Vorst* (Brussels: Jacob Debruyne, 2006), 54–56.

80. Jan van der Stock, *Early Prints, the Print Collection of the Royal Library of Belgium* (London: Harvey Miller, 2002), 46, no. 096 and, Joseph van den Gheyn, *Catalogue des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, Vol. 1 (Brussels: H. Lamertin, 1901), 264–265.

81. It is the largest known Antwerp altarpiece and cost 900 Brabantine Guilders, an extremely high sum given that a small Antwerp altar at the time could be purchased for 35 Guilders. See Godehard Hoffmann, 'Ein Antwerpener Flügelaltar für die Dortmunder Franziskaner', in Barbara Welzel et al. eds., *Altes Gold in neuer Pracht: das Goldene Wunder in der Dortmunder Petrikirche* (Bielefeld: Verlag fü r Regionalgeschichte, 2006), 79.

82. This panel is followed by a representation of the Marriage of Emerentiana and Stollanus, a depiction of Emerentiana at prayer and, finally, the Birth of Saint Anne. The next row features eight scenes from the Life of Saint Anne culminating in the Meeting at the Golden Gate. The third row features episodes from the Life of the Virgin and the fourth concludes with scenes from the Life of Christ. The programme is completed with four small panels in the top corners of the wings, which feature the Holy family in Egypt, the Massacre of the Innocents, the Return from Egypt and the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple.

83. For further details regarding the early history of the Dominicans in Frankfurt see Heinrich Hubert Koch, *Das Dominikanerkloster zu Frankfurt am Main 13 bis 16 Jahrhundert* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1892).

84. Wettengl, 'Donations', Chapter Five in *Frankfurt in the Late Middle Ages*.

85. Bodo Brinkmann, 'Hans Holbein the Elder', in *Städel Museum, Guide to the Collection* (Frankfurt am Main: Michael Imhof, 2008), 28–29.

86. For further details see Bodo Brinkman and Jochen Sander eds., *German Painting Before 1800 in Prominent Collections: An Illustrated Comprehensive Catalogue*, Vol. 1, Städel, Frankfurt am Main (Frankfurt am Main: Blick in die Welt 1999), 38.

87. See 'The Libellus of Blessed Jordon', 120, in Biographical Documents, 82. *Libellus de Principiis Ordinis Praedicatorum, CXX, Monumenta Historica Santi Patris Nostri Dominici*, MOPH, XVI, Institutum Historicum Fratrum Praedicatorum, Rome, 1935. Jordon of Saxony, a member of the German nobility, was Saint Dominic's contemporary and immediate successor as Master General of the Order.

88. For a discussion of whether the historically famous Dominicans represented may actually be contemporary portraits of members of the Order, see Katharina Krause, *Hans Holbein der Ältere* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2002), 173.

89. Hilda Graef, *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1994),

87, n.4.

90. See Wettengl, 'Donations', Chapter Five in *Frankfurt in the Late Middle Ages*, for a brief discussion of the Dominicans primacy in Frankfurt.

91. The iconography of this altarpiece is discussed in further detail by Andreas Hansert and Jochen Sander in *Der Annenaltar Des Meisters Von Frankfurt*.

92. A tree of Saint Dominic attributed to Fra Angelico (c.1400–55), can also be found in the predella of the Crucifixion with Saints fresco in the Chapter Room of San Marco Monastery, Florence. The Chapter Room would have also been accessible to the friars only. See William Hood, *Fra Angelico at San Marco* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 186–187.

93. For a history of the Burgkloster see Russalka Nikolov ed., *Das Burgkloster zu Lübeck* (Lubeck: Charles Coleman Verlag GmbH, 1992).

94. Uwe Albrecht ed., *Corpus der Mittelalterlichen Holzskulptur und Tafelmalerie in Schleswig-Holstein, Band 1, Hansestadt Lubeck, Sankt Annen-Museum* (Kiel: Ludwig, 2005), 415.

95. Campbell Dodgson, *Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Woodcuts preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, Vol. 1 (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1903), 107–108.

96. Seuse's 'Exemplar', his collection of writings, was widely known in the fifteenth century. For further details see Jeffery F. Hamburger, 'Medieval Self Fashioning: Authorship, Authority and Autobiography in Seuse's Exemplar', in Kent Emery and Joseph Wawrykow eds., *Christ Among the Medieval Dominicans* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1998), 430–461. A second impression of the woodcut was in the Albertina in Vienna by 1924.

97. Both these inscriptions can also be found on the genealogical tree of the Dominicans on page 26 of *Turrecremata'a Meditations*, Rome, 1473. See Dodgson, *Catalogue of Early German and Flemish Woodcuts*, 108.

98. For a discussion of the nature of the early print market see David Landau and Peter Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 1470–1550 (London and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) and Peter Parshall and Rainer Schoch eds., *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and their Public*, Exh. Cat. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005).

99. Richard S. Field, 'Early Woodcuts: The Known and Unknown', in Parshall and Schoch eds., *Origins of European Printmaking: Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and their Public*.

100. Landau and Parshall, *The Renaissance Print*, 347.

101. A Netherlandish woodcut of a similar date, but with slightly different iconography, may have also had a similar didactic function. For further details see Richard S. Field, *Fifteenth-Century Woodcuts and Metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art Washington DC* (Washington, DC.: Publications Department, National Gallery of Art, 1965), Cat. No. 256 (Rosenwald Collection 1964.8.11).

102. Julian M. Luxford ed., 'Woodcuts in Carthusian Books', in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, Medieval Church Studies 14 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 254.

103. An early sixteenth-century triptych featuring a Carthusian spiritual genealogy can also be

found in the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremburg.

104. Revelation 22:2: 'In the midst of the street thereof, and on both sides of the river, was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations'.

105. See for example the panel by Pacino di Bonaguida, c.1310, for the Poor Clares of Monticelli, and a fresco by Taddeo Gaddi, c.1340, in the refectory of Santa Croce in Florence. For a discussion of these works and their relationship to Bonaventure's *Lignum vit* ae see Jeryldene Wood, *Women, Art, and Spirituality; The Poor Clares of Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 73–85 and 179–180.

106. Thomas P. Campbell ed., *Tapestry in the Renaissance, Art and Magnificence*, Metropolitan Museum of Art (London and New York: Yale University Press, 2002), Cat. No. 4, 65–70.

107. M. Viale Ferrero, 'L'Albero Francescano', in Maria G. Ciardi Dupré dal Poggetto ed., *Il Tesoro Della Basilica Di San Francesco Ad Assisi*, Il miracolo di Assisi 3 (Assisi: Casa editrice francescana, 1980), 159–165.

108. Campbell, *Tapestry in the Renaissance*, 66.

109. See Wettengl, *Frankfurt in the Late Middle Ages*, Cat. No. 46.

110. It has also been attributed to Jan Mostaert. See Max Friedländer, 'Lucas van Leyden and Other Dutch Masters of His Time', in *Early Netherlandish Painting* (translated by Heinz Norden), Vol. X (Leyden: Sijthoff 1973), 71.

111. Henk van Os et al., *Netherlandish Art in the Rijksmuseum*, Vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Waanders, 2000), 72–74.

112. Friedländer, 'Lucas van Leyden and Other Dutch Masters of His Time', 71

113. Os has proposed that this figure may be the rector of an ecclesiastical or charitable institution, possibly the convent to which the nun belonged. Os et al., *Netherlandish Art in the Rijksmuseum*, 74.

114. Didier Martens, 'Un disciple Tardif de Rogier de la Pasture: Maitre Johannes (alias Johannes Hoesacker?)', *Oud Holland*, Vol. 114, No. 2–4 (2000), 80–81.

115. An entry in the Abbey's ledgers of 1513 records a payment of nine florins to a painter, Johannes, for a tableau of the Legend of Saint Anne. See Martens, 'Un disciple tardif de Rogier de la Pasture', 81–83. It seems that this may have been the artist responsible for the altarpiece, although it has been argued elsewhere that this was far too small an amount for such a major work, and that therefore Johannes may merely have been reimbursed for his assistance on the triptych. If this was the case, another artist, perhaps Goossen van der Weyden, who had strong links with the Abbey and with Antonius Tsgrooten, could have been responsible for the majority of the work. See Gérard Passemiers, 'Retable de la Legende de Sainte Anne', in *Goossen van der Weyden (1465–1538/1545), Peintre d'Ecole Anversoise* (Brussels: G. Passemiers, 1987). The exterior of the wings depict the standing figures of the twelve apostles with Saint Paul. There is a striking stylistic contrast between the interior and exterior of the triptych, supporting the argument for at least two different hands.

116. The depiction of the lactating Virgin in this work, unusual in Tree of Jesse iconography, may be an allusion to the legend of lactation of Bernard of Clairvaux, who was a friend of Saint Norbert, the founder of the Order. The inscriptions are taken from the prophecy of Isaiah 11:1 and Numbers 24:17.

4
The Tree of Jesse and the Schöllenbach Altarpiece
A Case Study

Previous chapters have explored the late medieval use of Tree of Jesse iconography, through its inclusion as a prefiguration of the Birth of the Virgin in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, the subsequent appropriation of the subject by those keen to promote devotion to Saint Anne and its adoption by religious orders to meet their own specific needs. Those chapters looked at a range of works, often in different media, in an attempt to ascertain both the purpose of the imagery and the scope of renewed interest in the subject. This chapter will focus on only one work, the magnifi-cent Schöllenbach altarpiece, exploring its provenance and function to provide a better understanding of exactly why the Tree of Jesse motif might have been employed by an individual patron in the early sixteenth century, and, more generally, how it could have been understood by a wider audience (Figure 4.1).

The choice of this altarpiece was determined largely by the unusual circumstances of its survival: although vast and impressive, it has remained for the most part in the possession of the family who commissioned it, and, to date, has received little scholarly attention.[1] Currently on display in the Hubert Chapel of Erbach Castle, situated in the Odenwald region of southern Germany, it is believed that the altarpiece was originally intended for the fifteenth-century church of Schöllenbach, approximately twenty kilometres to the south-east of the castle, and once part of the estate of the Counts of Erbach. In 2005 the state of Hessen bought Erbach Castle and its contents from the Erbach family, and in 2006 the decision was made to undertake a full-scale restoration of the altarpiece. This took four years to complete, and removal of dirt and over-painting revealed that it was once of extremely high quality.[2] The discovery of an unknown painting on the back of the *caisse* has enabled a more precise dating of the work, thereby allowing for comparisons to be made with other altarpieces, and a possible link with an Ulm-based workshop is explored. After establishing the provenance and original appearance of the

altarpiece, a thorough examination of the iconography within a historical framework allows for certain conclusions to be drawn regarding the particular environment of its commission. Building on previous research conducted by Elspeth de Weerth in 1982, it is suggested that in addition to making a statement about the donor's authority, wealth and status, the subject matter can be seen to reflect the more fundamental needs of pilgrims, who may have visited Schöllenbach to pray for the miracle of new life and the safe delivery of healthy children.[3]

Figure 4.1 The Schöllenbach Altarpiece, Early Sixteenth Century, Hubert Chapel, Erbach Castle, Erbach im Odenwald, Hesse

(Size: 413 × 530 × 64 cm) (Photo: ©Christine Krienke 2010, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen)

The Church of Schöllenbach

The construction of the church of Schöllenbach in the latter part of the fifteenth century was instigated by Philipp von Erbach (1424–1477), who appears to have been primarily motivated by the desire to house a miraculous image of

the Virgin. Although this image is now lost, reference to the work, and to the volume of pilgrims who visited it, can be found in the chronicles of the Erbach family, compiled by Daniel Schneider in 1736.[4] Schneider's source was a Latin document, dated the 19th October, 1474, which confirms the foundation of the church on behalf of the archbishop of Mainz.[5] This document discusses Count Philipp von Erbach's request to establish a fund to build a church dedicated to the Virgin at Schöllenbach, which it states had become necessary due to the large number of visitors who came to worship an image of the Virgin, bringing with them gifts and offerings.[6] The fund, which was to be supplemented by visitors to the shrine, was also to provide for a priest, who would live in the village and work exclusively for the church.

Although only the choir stands today, the architectural remains indicate that the church would have once consisted of three aisles, with three bays on either side. This structure would have been a relatively large building for such a small village, which Schneider believes can only be explained by the fact that it must have catered for a large number of pilgrims.[7] Although it seems that the main attraction was the image of the Virgin, the church was also built over the source of a miracle spring. According to Schneider, this spring was originally accessed from inside the church via a well behind the altar, although it currently comes out at the side of the church and is caught in a stone basin. Schneider states that there were several old legends that attested to the healing power of the water from this spring, and it seems likely that it was used to reinforce the pilgrim's prayers and formed part of the pilgrimage ritual.[8] A door in the northern choir wall, which is now closed off, may once have been where the pilgrims exited the church after processing around the altar to visit the well.

Schöllenbach was by no means unique: prior to the Reformation, the Odenwald was home to many such miracle springs, with some of the earliest pilgrimage sites traced as far back as the eighth and ninth centuries.[9] It seems, however, that these sites reached a particular peak in popularity during the second half of the fifteenth century, when, according to Arnold Angenendt, a 'veritable pilgrimage fever' had broken out all over Europe.[10] Although the most prestigious pilgrimages were to Jerusalem or Mount Sinai, these journeys were an expensive and time consuming undertaking, and consequently more accessible local sites became extremely fashionable, creating a network of pilgrimage routes.[11] Although Schöllenbach now seems rather remote, it was once situated along one of these major routes, which connected the sites of Güttersbach and Walldürn. The church of Saint Maria in Güttersbach stands on the site of a thirteenth-century miracle spring.[12] Walldürn, however, did not become a major destination for pilgrims until 1445, when Pope Eugene IV confirmed the miracle of the Holy Blood.[13] The steady stream of pilgrims

between Gütters-bach and Walldürn during the second half of the fifteenth century must have meant that smaller healing shrines along this route prospered significantly from the passing trade. This argument is supported by the fact that although many of these sites originally had small Romanesque churches, the majority were replaced during the fifteenth century with larger Gothic structures. These constructions have subsequently either been modernised or lie in ruins, resulting in the loss of their furnishings and often concealing their original function.[14]

The Provenance of the Schöllenbach Altarpiece

Evidence that the altarpiece was originally commissioned by the Erbach family in the sixteenth century is provided by the presence of the donors' coats of arms in the predella. On the viewer's left are the arms of the Erbach family and, on the right, are those of the Wertheims. Consequently, it is assumed that these relate to the marriage of Eberhard von Erbach (1475–1539) to Maria von Wertheim (1485–1553), which took place on the 7th August, 1503.[15] As the couple were cousins, a dispensation had to be granted by the pope, which was received on the 7th May in the same year.[16] Evidence that it was commissioned specifically for the high altar of the church at Schöllenbach is supported by a document in the Erbach archives, a receipt that records a payment made to a priest, who was sent to Schöllenbach by Count George von Erbach (1548–1605) in 1601 to establish the condition of the work.[17] In addition, the monumental size of the altarpiece makes it far too large for the castle chapel, where it currently has to sit on the floor against the long wall of the nave. Following the Reformation, there was a decline in the number of pilgrims visiting Schöllenbach, and in the early seventeenth century the retable was moved to the newly built Fried-hofskirche, the cemetery church in Erbach.[18] It remained there until 1872, when it was bought back by the then Count Eberhard von Erbach for 500 florins, and placed in the Hubert Chapel.[19]

The monumental scale of the altarpiece, which measures with its wings open 413 × 530 cm, is comparable to other monumental southern German works of the period, such as the renowned Holy Blood altarpiece by Tilman Riemenschneider, or the equally acclaimed altarpiece on the high altar of the former abbey church of Saint John the Baptist, Blaubeuren.[20] It consists of a predella, an almost square central shrine with raised centre and two movable wings, a shape that is also consistent with other southern German retables of

the period.[21] It appears to be made up of two types of wood: the frame is constructed in pine, while the sculptures and reliefs on the wings, as far as can be ascertained, are carved out of limewood. Once again, this is consistent with a southern German origin, as a school of sculptors specialising in limewood carving blossomed in Southern Germany in the fifty years between 1475 and 1525.[22] Pine for the frame was also readily available from the Tirol, on the alpine southern edge of Germany.[23]

The sides of the *caisse* have hinge fixtures which appear authentic, and the wings have been constructed in the same way as the *caisse*, suggesting that they are also original to the work.[24] Drill holes in the upper part of the frame indicate that the altar-piece once had a crowning superstructure, known as a *Gesprenge*, a carved wooden canopy made up of vaultings, finials and foliage, which were all typical of southern German production of this period.[25] For the choir of the Schöllenbach church to have accommodated the height of the altarpiece with its lost superstructure, it must have once been vaulted. This is corroborated by the discovery of residual stones at the site by Elspeth de Weerth, which, she has established, originally supported a high vault.[26] With its crowning superstructure, the altarpiece would have therefore filled the choir, making a significant impression on anyone who visited the church.

It is not only the physical structure of the altarpiece which indicates a southern German origin for the work. Christiane Haeseler's technical investigation has shown that the appearance of the altarpiece has altered considerably, and that it would have once been comparable to other high quality works of the region. An unusually thick isolation layer on top of the chalk ground, under the painted costumes of the figures and branches of the tree, was identified; this would have been particularly sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity, causing the paint layer to flake off. Consequently, not only has the altarpiece been extensively over-painted, but leaf gold, which had been widely used on the costumes, was largely replaced with flat gilding in the nineteenth century, resulting in a loss of plasticity. In addition, it is apparent from other remaining fragments that gilding elsewhere would have once been considerably more sophisticated. The matt gilding of the trunk of the tree, for example, once contrasted with the burnished gilding of other elements, such as the leaves, coats and crowns of the kings. As remnants of both leaf gold and silver have been found under the over-paint on the headdresses and hair of the figures in the central shrine and on the wings, it would seem that several parts that are now covered in paint would have also once been gilded. Other decorative techniques, such as the use of lustres in red and green, *sgraffito* engraving, the application of press brocades and gilded paper pieces were also used to embellish the dress of the carved figures and reliefs, although to a great extent these decorations are now lost or concealed.

All these techniques can be found on other southern German altarpieces of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries.[27]

Despite all the nineteenth-century over-painting, the polychromy on the faces and hands of the figures in the central shrine, and on the reliefs of the interior wings, is predominantly original.[28] The application of several thin layers of paint brought these figures to life, and the Virgin's face and some of the other female figures would have originally had a further pale finishing layer, which would have made them appear less red in colour.[29] In addition, the painting in the background of the relief panels of the interior wings, some of it partially hidden by tracery, is also mostly original.[30]

Although the paint layer is damaged, all the carved figures in the centre of the *caisse* and predella, as well as the reliefs on the interior wings, are intact.[31] The decorative carving on the clothing of the wing figures is similar to the decorative carving on the sculptured figures in the centre of the *caisse*, indicating that all the elements of the altarpiece were probably constructed in the same workshop. However, it is possible to discern different hands in the carvings of the central figures, and overall the quality of the carving is varied. Unfortunately, parts of the frame have been lost along with the superstructure, and from grooves on the upper front edge, and evidence of a previous locking mechanism, it would appear that a wooden panel inserted sideways would have once been used to cover the predella *caisse* when the altarpiece was closed.[32]

When the altarpiece was removed from the Hubert Chapel in 2006, a previously unknown painting on the back of the predella was revealed (Figure 4.2). There is no evidence that this painting received any nineteenth-century restoration, and it is in a poor state of preservation. Nevertheless, it is apparent that it once depicted Christ's face on a veil held aloft by hovering angels. Known as the Veil of Veronica or *Sudarium*, Rainer Kahsnitz has shown that this was a popular subject for the back wall of predellas of southern German altarpieces of this period.[33] As Diana Webb has discussed, this Veronica image also had a strong, although not exclusive, pilgrimage association and was often represented on pilgrims' badges.[34] This may be a further indication that the faithful walked behind the altar as they processed through the Schöllenbach church, on their way to and from the miracle spring located behind the altar. If this was the case, the back of the predella, sitting on the altar, would have been at approximately eye level.

Figure 4.2 The Schöllenbach Altarpiece, Painting on Back of Predella

(Size: 95 × 330 × 64 cm) (Photo: ©Christine Krienke 2010, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hessen)

The fictive architectural details on the upper corners of the predella painting are decorated with *all'antica* festoons and *putti*, which contrast with the painted carvings and relief backgrounds of the shrine. Even so, similarities in technique suggest that they are contemporaneous with the rest of the decoration.[35] Above the painting are the initials 'HP' and the letters 'MCCCCCXV' (1515), which may be the date of completion of the altarpiece and the monogram of the artist.[36] Although the style of the painting suggests an artist with knowledge of Italian painting, no artist with the initials HP has been identified, and it was commonplace from 1510 onwards to find an Italianate style, consisting of *putti*, garlands and other ornaments, incorporated in southern German limewood altarpieces.[37]

The physical evidence considered so far confirms that the Schöllenbach altarpiece is a fairly typical example of good quality southern German workshop production of the late-medieval period, and that all elements of the work, apart from the over-painting, are original. It is also likely that the earliest date for its commission was 1503, the date of the marriage of Eberhard von Erbach to Maria von Wertheim. However, it might not have actually been received by the church until 1515, if the date on the back on the predella is taken as a *terminus post quem*. Attribution to a specific workshop has, however, not been possible, although there may be some indication of an Ulm origin.

In 1931 Rudolph Schnellbach specifically mentioned the Schöllenbach altarpiece in his chapter on works of Swabian derivation.[38] He suggested that the style of the carving may indicate a Würzburgian workshop, comparing the sculpture of the Madonna and Child in the central shrine to that of Riemenshneider's stone Virgin and Child in Frankfurt (Figure 4.3).[39] However, although general similarities in pose and style can be observed, these tendencies appear to have become relatively standard when depicting the Virgin and Child in southern German altarpieces of the period. A closer

comparison, in terms of facial features and the construction of the draperies, can perhaps be made with the work of Niklaus Weckmann, who was based in Ulm in the early sixteenth century (Figure 4.4). Ulm was an important local centre for limewood carving, and although Erbach lies approximately two hundred and fifty kilometres to the north, it is still possible that the altarpiece could have been commissioned from one of the specialised craftsmen in the city.[40]

The possibility of an Ulm origin is supported by further comparisons with the Blaubeuren altarpiece, a polyptych attributed to the Ulm-based carver Michel Erhart and his son, Gregor. Michel Erhart first appears as *Michel, bildhower* in the Ulm tax rolls of 1469, and is identified again in 1522, when he receives a charitable pension.[41] During this period, he was the most prominent sculptor in the Ulm records, and his workshop was the source of some of the most distinguished wooden carving in the region. The Blaubeuren altarpiece, a work of exceptional quality, was completed in 1494 for the wealthy Benedictine abbey church of Saint John the Baptist in Blaubeuren, less than eight kilometres from Ulm (Figure 4.5).[42] As previously stated, both altarpieces are of a similarly large size and have a comparable format, with a raised central shrine. In addition, both were designed to have predellas with the unusual front sliding closing panel. It seems plausible to assume, therefore, that the patrons of the Schöllenbach altarpiece were aware of the work of Michel Erhart and the Blaubeuren altarpiece and desired something of a similar nature for their church.

A link with the Blaubeuren altarpiece can be substantiated further by a curious iconographical detail that has gone unnoticed to date. On one of the painted panels from the Blaubeuren wings, attributed to the Ulm-based artist Bartholomäus Zeitblom, a servant can be seen testing the temperature of the water with her foot, prior to bathing the newborn John the Baptist (Figure 4.6).[43] This action is imitated by the servant preparing to bathe the newborn Mary on the Schöllenbach wings. The earliest known representation of this detail appears on a

Figure 4.3 *Virgin and Child*, Sandstone, Tilman Riemenschneider, c.1520

(Height: 156.5 cm) © Liebieghaus Skulpturen Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main (Photo: Rühl & Bormann)

Figure 4.4 Detail of the *Virgin and Child* From the Rother Altarpiece, Workshop of Niklaus Weckmann, c.1481–1528

©Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Mannheim (Photo: Jean Christen)

Figure 4.5 The Blaubeuren Altarpiece, Michel and Gregor Erhart, c.1494, Former Abbey Church of Saint John the Baptist, Blaubeuren

(Size: 570 × 805 cm including predella) (Photo: © Achim Bunz)

panel attributed to Conrad Laib in the Palazzo Vescovile Museum in Padua, originally thought to have come from the wings of the Salzburg Altarpiece of 1449.[44] Although he was active in Salzburg in the mid-fifteenth century, Laib was born in Ensingen, not far from Heilbronn, and he may have been the source for what appears to be a particularly southern German iconographical invention. In 1493, at approximately the same time that he was working on the Blaubeuren altarpiece, Michel Erhart was also collaborating with Hans Holbein the Elder on the Weingarten Altarpiece, for the chapel of the Virgin in the Benedictine monastery of Weingarten, south of Ulm. The Birth of the Virgin panel on the painted wings from this work, currently displayed in Augsburg Cathedral, also features the servant testing the temperature of the water with her foot (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6 Detail, *Birth of the John the Baptist*, Left Wing of the Blaubeuren Altarpiece, Bartholomäus Zeitblom, c.1494

(Photo: © Achim Bunz)

Figure 4.7 Detail, *Birth of the Virgin*, From the Weingarten Altarpiece Wings, Hans Holbein the Elder, c.1493, Augsburg Cathedral

© Bisch. Finanzkammer Augsburg, Kirchl. Bauwesen und Kunst

It seems likely, therefore, that the sculptor responsible for the reliefs on the Schöllen-bach altarpiece was aware of the Blaubeuren and/or Weingarten works, and may have even been involved in their creation.[45]

Whilst it has not been possible to identify the name of a particular sculptor, the conception and quality of the Schöllenbach altarpiece is clearly of a high standard, indicating a commission by a wealthy patron, from a leading southern German workshop.

The Iconography of the Schöllenbach Altarpiece

The exteriors of the wings had sustained such large losses by the nineteenth century that they were completely over-painted with thick brown paint, which was applied again in the twentieth century. Removal of these layers during the recent restoration revealed the remnants of a large Annunciation scene that had been mentioned by Schneider in the eighteenth century.[46] The remaining fragments on the left wing feature parts of the face and wings of the angel Gabriel, and a speech banner with letters from his salutation '*Ave Maria Gratia Plena Dominus Tecum'*. Some architectural details were also discovered. The right wing would have originally depicted the kneeling Virgin at her *prie dieu*, although only small pieces of her face, hair and dress remain, along with fragments of the room. Nevertheless, despite severe losses, similarities in technique indicate that the exterior wings were executed at the same time as the painting on the rest of the altarpiece. For example, when comparing Gabriel's eye with the eye of the angel on the back of the predella, and the original polychromy of one of the king's eyes from the centre of the shrine, all exhibit the same thickly contoured irises, fine lashes and reflections of light.[47]

The predella raises the main body of the altarpiece so that the wings can be more easily moved, and these wings also have a raised portion to allow for a full closing of the central shrine. A bearded Jesse lies on his right side asleep on the floor of the predella, his head resting in his hand. The root of the tree grows up from his breast, the trunk rising up into the central shrine to culminate in a flower blossom. This blossom supports a crowned Virgin, standing on a crescent moon; she holds the naked Christ Child in her arms and is surrounded by a mandorla. The Christ Child has an orb in his left hand and raises his right hand in a gesture of benediction. Branches of the tree support the half figures of twelve kings in flower blossoms; all are crowned and carry sceptres, but only David can be positively identified by his harp. The kings are

depicted as young and old, and their characterisation is both rich and varied, their gestures and head positions suggesting that they were conceived of in pairs. Two other branches come off the root in the predella to point to half figures in the corners; the first can be identified by his horns as Moses and, the second, who wears a mitre, is probably meant to represent Aaron, the elder brother of Moses.[48] Examination of the figures indicates that they would have once held objects: in all likelihood, Aaron would have held a crosier, and Moses either a scroll or the tablets of the law.

The tracery that frames the central shrine and decorates the upper portion is fashioned into branches with tendrils. This decoration is carried over to the interior of the wings, and is used to subdivide the iconographic narrative into individual scenes relating to the Life of the Virgin. These narrative panels consist of low-relief wooden sculptures and background painting. The sequence begins at the top of the left wing with the Meeting of Saint Anne and Joachim at the Golden Gate, and includes a vignette of the Annunciation to Joachim in the background. This sequence is followed by the Birth of the Virgin and, beneath these scenes, the Presentation of the Virgin and the Annunciation. The narrative continues, on the interior of the lower half of the right wing, with the Visitation, to the left, and Purification of the Virgin, on the right. The crescent moon on Aaron's mitre, in the predella, is replicated on the mitres of the priests in the Purification of the Virgin and the Presentation of the Virgin reliefs, denoting that all are high priests of the Old Law.[49] The upper part of the right wing depicts the Death of the Virgin across both sections, with a half figure of God the Father in the uppermost part. Under God the Father, there must have once been a small figural representation of the soul of the Virgin, although now only her fingers remain clasped in God's right hand. The narrative therefore reads chronologically, from left to right and top to bottom in the left wing, but left to right, bottom to top, in the right wing. This unusual arrangement must have been partly necessitated by the need to place God the Father at the top of the open altarpiece, on a level with the crowned Virgin in the raised centre. It is also a practical solution to the rather awkward shape of the upper wings.

Interpretation of Iconography

It has been established that the Schöllenbach altarpiece was commissioned from a southern German, possibly Ulm-based workshop, by a member of the Erbach family in the early sixteenth century. However, an explanation for the

choice of subject matter is more difficult to determine.[50] Several late-medieval examples of Tree of Jesse iconography can be found near Schöllenbach, such as the c.1515 stone relief from the demolished cloister of the cathedral of Saint Peter in Worms, or the stained glass windows by Peter Hemmel von Andlau, in both Ulm Münster (c.1480) and the collegiate church of Saint George in Tübingen (c.1478). In southern German carved altarpieces of this date, however, the iconography was usually employed as a secondary subject, primarily restricted to the predella and, due to its organic nature, sometimes extending upwards to frame part of the central shrine.[51] This then raises the question of why the Erbachs would have chosen traditional Tree of Jesse iconography as the main subject for their large and expensive altarpiece. As a representation of genealogy, one possible solution lies in the integral meaning of the iconography itself.

The use of the Tree of Jesse as a way of expressing and validating noble pedigree has a long history, and images of this iconography were often used in civic triumphs, as representations of a king's messianic heritage.[52] The twelfth-century Tree of Jesse window at Saint Denis is often cited as an example of Capetian royal propaganda, and the window at Chartres, some years later, has been linked to Louis VII.[53] It has been argued that the Tree of Jesse was being used in these early windows to confirm the legitimacy of succession. Later images, such as the fifteenth-century Tree of Jesse window in the axial chapel of Évreux Cathedral (1465–70), have also been seen in a royal context, establishing an analogy between divine and temporal royalty, whilst still honouring the Virgin and her Son.[54] Given this association, the donors of the Schöllenbach altarpiece may have also deliberately employed the motif as a means of communicating their own distinguished lineage.

Interest in genealogy had reached new heights in Germany in the early sixteenth century, with an enormous number of family trees produced for the Emperor Maximilian between 1500 and 1518.[55] Many of these have a visual relationship with the Tree of Jesse, and a manuscript biography of Maximilian dated c.1508–10, the *Historia Friderici et Maximiliani* (Hs.Blau 9, fol.6r, Haus-Hof-und Staatsarchive, Vienna), actually begins with a Hapsburg family tree that is clearly derived from Tree of Jesse iconography. Maximilian's interest in genealogy is further exemplified by his commission of a tomb for his wife, Mary of Burgundy (d.1482), which was installed in the church of Notre Dame, in Bruges, by late 1501. The genealogical trees that decorate the long sides of this tomb can be seen as a legitimisation of Mary's claim to the Burgundian inheritance from her father, Charles the Bold, in the face of controversy over the regency of her husband in Flanders during her son's minority.[56] Visual parallels with the Tree of Jesse are again apparent and, as Ann Roberts has discussed, this was not the only instance where the iconography was used to

create an association between Mary of Burgundy and the Virgin. Although the genealogies created for the Emperor Maximilian are not traditional Tree of Jesse images, their association is obvious, and it is unsurprising that an aristocratic family would seek to mimic and capitalise on this established relationship, using Tree of Jesse and related iconography in conjunction with their own coat of arms to subtly convey their authority and right to govern their estates.[57] This is especially pertinent when we consider that the only son and heir of Count Philipp von Erbach, Erasmus, died in 1503 without any male heirs, a fact that has been overlooked in the previous literature.[58] Consequently, Eberhard von Erbach had inherited the Schöllenbach title and lands indirectly, and his estate was further extended through his marriage to Maria von Wertheim in the same year.

The Erbach family laid claim to a distinguished pedigree, maintaining that they were descended from Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer, who, according to legend, had married Charlemagne's daughter Imma.[59] The family could therefore trace themselves back to the Holy Roman Emperor himself. The earliest known record of this claim appears as a dedication in a printed copy of the *Vita et Gesti Karoli Magn* i (Life and Achievements of Charlemagne), which belonged to George von Erbach (1506–96), the son of the altarpiece's donors, Eberhard and Maria.[60] On the altarpiece itself, the coats of arms of Eberhard and Maria are always visible, even when the altarpiece is closed and, when open, the tracery that surrounds them in the form of branches creates a visual link with Jesse and the ancestors of Christ. It seems, therefore, that the Schöllenbach altarpiece was intentionally designed to reflect the status, wealth and power of the Erbach family, albeit within a pious setting.

In addition to this dynastic element, the iconography of the wings is a celebration of the Life of the Virgin, in accordance with the dedication of the church, and commemorates the main Marian feasts: the Conception of the Virgin, the Birth of the Virgin, the Presentation of the Virgin, the Annunciation, the Visitation of the Virgin and the Purification of the Virgin. The most important feast of all, the Assumption of the Virgin, is alluded to by the inclusion of the Dormition, which is given particular prominence on the right wing. The Virgin's central position, at the top of the Tree of Jesse, confirms her Davidic descent and status as mother of God. Although, as we have seen in previous chapters, it is not unusual to find several of these events depicted alongside Tree of Jesse iconography in other works of the period, the choice of icono-graphic programme for this altarpiece may have been influenced by the pilgrimage status of Schöllenbach itself.

It seems that pilgrims may have gone to Schöllenbach predominantly to pray for the wellbeing of their families, and to ask to be blessed with many children. Among all ranks of society the main reason for marriage was the

procreation of children. A successful marriage meant many children, yet infant mortality rates were high.[61] Schneider states that the water at Schöllenbach was reputed by old legends not only to be good for headaches and eye problems, but also children's illnesses, while Max Walter claims that the water was attributed, more specifically, with the power to aid fecundity.[62] The Tree of Jesse, as a representation of holy genealogy, is therefore highly appropriate, and it may even have been seen by a contemporary audience as an image of fecundity itself. This hypothesis is supported by the additional narrative scenes on the wings, particularly the Meeting of Saint Anne and Joachim at the Golden Gate on the left wing, which relates to the conception of the Virgin. The presence of Saint Anne, an older woman who had conceived, is clearly pertinent, and, as we saw in Chapter Two, Saint Anne also had a strong association with pregnancy and childbirth. This can be further demonstrated by local custom. For example, in Düren women would put an Anne girdle around their waists, either to protect their unborn child or to promote pregnancy, while in other places, women were said to pray for a child before an altar with an image of Saint Anne.[63] A prayer said for parturient women even references the root of Jesse and Saint Anne.[64] The scene of the Visitation may have also been perceived as particularly relevant. According to Saint Luke, Elizabeth conceived a son in her old age, thereby demonstrating to the devout pilgrim that the miracle of conception was possible, even among those presumed to be barren.[65] It is unusual to see Elizabeth, rather than the Virgin, placed on the heraldic right, and this may be a further indication of her importance in this particular work.[66] Although little is known about the gender breakdown of pilgrims, it would seem that whilst men considerably outnumbered women on long-distance pilgrimages, the situation was very different at local shrines.[67] Nevertheless, both men and women would have been attracted to the miracle spring at Schöllenbach, as it was in the interests of both parties in a patriarchal society to bear healthy children and secure heirs. This subject is also one that would have been close to the hearts of Eberhard and Maria Erbach, who, as cousins, could have been concerned about the birth of healthy offspring to continue the family line. The depiction of the midwife with her foot in the bath may even relate to the idea of a pilgrims' footbath, and could also be an oblique reference to Schöllenbach's spring.[68]

The Annunciation scene that was once depicted on the outside of the wings is not unusual, and was a popular choice for the exteriors of both Netherlandish and southern German altarpieces.[69] As the feast of the Annunciation usually fell during Lent, when the altarpiece remained closed, it was considered particularly appropriate.[70] However, the subject can also be seen to relate to ideas of conception and childbirth. Assuming that the Schöllenbach work had a similar liturgical function to other altar-pieces, and

was opened only on feast days and Sundays, the view most commonly seen by the pilgrims was the Annunciation. This was relevant to all those who came to Schöllenbach seeking the miracle of new life, as the Annunciation was perceived as the beginning of the Incarnation, the point at which God assumed his human form as Jesus Christ. It is, therefore, also the moment of the Virgin's conception of her Divine Son. The fact that the Annunciation is repeated, on the interior of the left wing, is a further indication that this event, in particular, must have been considered of special importance to the donors, who presumably had masses said on their behalf by the priest in front of the altar.

The success of the Schöllenbach altarpiece is evidenced by the survival of a considerably smaller retable in the pilgrimage chapel of Amorsbrunn, the site of another miraculous spring approximately forty kilometres from Schöllenbach. This altar-piece, thought to have been acquired when the chapel was remodelled in 1521, also features Tree of Jesse iconography in its central shrine (Figure 4.8). The Erbach family are not known to have been involved in any commissions for the chapel, nor are they connected with Amorsbrunn, which came under the jurisdiction

Figure 4.8 The Amorsbrunn Altarpiece, Sixteenth Century, Amorsbrunn Chapel

(Size: 375 × 365 cm) (Photo: Susan Green)

of Amorbach Abbey.[71] Therefore, it is plausible that the reason for the similarity in design is linked to the pilgrimage status of the chapel itself. Pilgrimage was an extremely profitable business; if pilgrims were bypassing Amorsbrunn in favour of Schöllenbach, this may well have motivated the administrators of the Amorsbrunn Chapel to acquire a similar altarpiece for their new high altar, hoping to imply that their miracle spring was just as

efficacious as their neighbour's.

Conclusion

Analysis of the physical evidence confirms that the Schöllenbach altarpiece was commissioned by Eberhard and Maria von Erbach from a southern German workshop in the early sixteenth century. It is similar in several respects to other southern German retables of the period, and its form and style may specifically indicate an Ulm origin. Although representations of the Tree of Jesse can be found on other retables in the region, its choice as the primary subject matter to decorate Schöllen-bach's high altar was clearly deliberate. Schöllenbach church was a popular site on a major pilgrimage route, and the size and iconography of its altarpiece were designed to make a significant impression on its visitors, connecting with both their spiritual and physical needs. The reputation of the miracle spring as an aid to fecundity is reflected not only in the Tree of Jesse motif itself, but also in the emphasis on Saint Elizabeth, and the inclusion of Saint Anne on the interior wings. Childlessness was thought to reflect some kind of hidden sin, yet there were several dangers and complications associated with giving birth, and it is unsurprising that women prayed to the holy Mothers to intercede on their behalf. The Annunciation scene on the exterior would have also had a special resonance for those who visited Schöllenbach to pray for the miracle of new life.

Aristocratic dynasties depended largely on their ability to make marital matches that would strengthen kinship ties as well as provide male heirs to inherit land and titles. In 1503, Eberhard von Erbach had indirectly inherited the title and lands of the Schöllenbach estate, and his marriage to his cousin, Maria von Wertheim, in the same year, extended his property and authority even further. Therefore, the use of Tree of Jesse imagery may also have been intended as an analogy, expressing the donor's distinguished lineage by association with the ancestors of Christ and, more particularly, confirming Eberhard's right to rule over Schöllenbach and its neighbouring lands. Consequently, it seems that the large and expensive Schöllenbach altarpiece was not only making a major statement about the Erbach family's wealth, but its iconography had layers of meaning, and was able to fulfil two specific functions.

The use of Tree of Jesse iconography as the subject matter for German carved altar-pieces was not unique. The following chapter will consider why

the Tree of Jesse also became a particular speciality of Antwerp workshops in the early sixteenth century.

Notes

1. The altarpiece was the subject of an article by this author in 2015, see Susan L. Green, 'Pre-Reformation Patronage and Pilgrimage in Southern Germany: An Investigation into the Origin and Function of the Schöllenbach Altarpiece', *Immediations*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2015), 68–88.
2. I am extremely grateful to Christiane Haeseler at the Landesamt für Denkmalpflege for allowing me access to the altarpiece during restoration and for sharing her findings with me. A summary of her report has been published in *Denkmalpflege Kulturgeschichte, Herausgegeben vom Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hesse*, 4–2010, 2–8.
3. Elspeth de Weerth studied the Schöllenbach altarpiece for her master's thesis, which was completed in Frankfurt am Main in 1982. An article based on this research, 'Das Schöllenbacher Wurzel Jesse Retabel', was published in *Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein* (2005/NF 1), 77–91.
4. Daniel Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachische Stammtafel nebst deren Erklär— und Bewährungen oder hochgräflich Erbachische Historia* (Frankfurt am Main, 1736), 280.
5. Although the original of this document is now lost, Schneider transcribed it in his Appendix. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachische Stammtafel*, 540–543.
6. '*Sane pro parte Nobilis viri Philippi pincerne Domini in Erpach nepotis nostri fidelis dilecti nobis fuit expositum qualiter disposicione divina in villa Schelinbach infra limites & terminos ecclesie Parochialis five Pastorie Buernfelden nostre dyocesis ex devocione quam Christi fideles ad gloriosam dei genetricem intemeratam semper virginem Mariam gerunt ad imaginem ejusdem virginis concursus fuerit & f[s?]it populi fidelis cum suis oblationibus & offertoriis unde ipse'*.
7. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachische Stammtafel*, 280. '*Die Größe des Gebäudes und seine ganze Einrichtung bezeuget, daß der Zulauff dahin groß gewesen seyn müsse'*.
8. Schneider suggests that there were also contemporary eighteenth-century accounts of the healing power of the water. '*Man weiß viel Wunders von der Würckung dieses Wassers, an alt hergebrachten Sagen zu erzehlen, und will auch neuere Exempel von ein= und andere dadurch geschehener heilung derer Krancken wissen*'.
9. For a discussion of pilgrimage sites in the Odenwald see Norbert Wand, *Mittelalterliche Einsiedeleien, Quellheiligtümer und Wallfahrtsstätten im Odenwald* (Heppenheim: Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Geschichts und Heimatvereine im Kreis Bergstraße, 1995).
10. Arnold Angenendt, 'Relics and Their Veneration', in Martina Bagnoli et al. eds., *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, The British Museum Exh. Cat. (London: British Museum Press, 2011), 23.
11. For a general discussion of pilgrimage during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries see

Angenendt, 'Relics and their Veneration' and Diana Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage* (New York: Palgrave, 2002). For Germany see: Christian Schreiber, *Wallfahrten durchs deutsche Land; eine Pilgerfahrt zu Deutschlands heiligen Stätten* (Berlin, 1928); Klaus Hemmerle et al., *Wallfahrt im Rheinland*, herausgegeben vom Amt fü r Rheinische Landeskunde in Verbindung mit dem Volkskunderat Rhein-Maas und dem Niederrheinischen Freilichtmuseum, Exh. Cat. (Köln and Bonn: Rheinland-Verlag and In Kommission bei R. Habelt, 1981), and Philip M. Soergel, 'Bavaria and Its Pilgrimages in the Later Middle Ages', in *Wondrous In His Saints: Counter-Reformation Propaganda in Bavaria* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1993).

12. Wand, *Mittelalterliche Einsiedeleien*, 51–54.

13. The relic of the corporal (the small cloth upon which the host and chalice rest during the Mass) in the church of Saint George is still the third largest pilgrimage destination in Germany. It is believed that in the fourteenth century a priest accidentally overturned the consecrated wine onto the corporal, which then formed an image of the crucified Christ.

14. For examples see Wand, *Mittelalterliche Einsiedeleien*, 41–46.

15. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachsche Stammtafel*, 281 and 153.

16. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachsche Stammtafel*, 153. Schneider states that they were related by the third degree in church calculations.

17. Weerth 'Das Schöllenbacher Wurzel Jesse Retabel', 84.

18. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachische Stammtafel*, 281. Further entries for the altarpiece in the nineteenth century can be found in the Erbach archives, however many documents were destroyed by fire in 1893 and further losses were incurred in 1944 when much of the Erbach archive, which had been moved to the State archive of Hessen in 1932, was destroyed.

19. Weerth, 'Das Schöllenbacher Wurzel Jesse Retabel', 84, n.32.

20. The Holy Blood altarpiece in Rothenburg ob de Tauber measures, when open, 378 × 417 cm and the Blaubeuren altarpiece measures 570 × 805 cm (including predellas).

21. Rainer Kahsnitz states that that this format became popular for southern German altarpieces, particularly along the upper Rhine. Kahsnitz and Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces, Masterpieces of the Late Gothic*, 34. He also states that reliefs on movable wings became increasingly common during this period, 136.

22. The area was particularly known for the Sommerlinde species, the broad-leaved lime, which was not only faster growing and bigger, but also marginally softer and lighter than the small-leaved variety. See Michael Baxandall, *The Limewood Sculptors of Renaissance Germany* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 1–28.

23. Many altarpieces of this period employ oak for the *caisse*, which was imported into northern Germany from the east Baltic and is more robust than pine or limewood. Pine however, which is lighter than oak, may have been preferable in this instance due to the extremely large size of the work.

24. The top edges of the wings have been slightly shaved; this was probably done in the nineteenth century, when the altarpiece was installed in the Hubert Chapel.

25. See Kahsnitz and Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces*, for many other examples. Commonly this superstructure would have contained carved wooden figures, usually saints, who were sometimes marginal to the central subject. Separate figures of the apostles Peter and Paul,

also in the Hubert Chapel, have been assigned to the altarpiece on stylistic grounds. The castle archives contain a nineteenth-century handwritten catalogue of the Erbach collection, item 40 states that these statues were given by the Friedhofskirche to the Hubert chapel at the same time as the altarpiece. The catalogue also mentions a lock belonging to the altarpiece that was later installed on the door of the chapel.

26. Weerth 'Das Schöllenbacher Wurzel Jesse Retabel', 84.

27. See for example Karl-Werner Bachmann, Eike Oellermann and Johannes Taubert, 'The Conservation and Technique of the Herlin Altarpiece (1466)', *Studies in Conservation*, Vol. 15 (1970), 327–369.

28. The thick isolation layer was not employed under the faces and hands of the figures in the central shrine, or on the reliefs on the interior of the wings; consequently these areas were less damaged and little over-painting was required.

29. All the male faces have a stronger orange or brown base tone, with variations in the flesh tones of the kings used for characterisation.

30. Some over-painting with a dark oil paint or a gold layer is obvious, particularly on the left wing, which has sustained the greatest damage.

31. The sceptres of the kings were replaced in the nineteenth century, and some minor additions and other small repairs were made to the tree.

32. Scratch marks and fittings can be found at the top and bottom of the predella *caisse*. In all likelihood this removable predella panel would have also been painted, as seen on the Blaubeuren Altar of 1494. See Kahsnitz and Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces*, plate 107.

33. Kahsnitz and Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces*, 258. Other examples illustrated by Kahsnitz can be found in the Church of Saint John the Baptist and Saint Martin, Schwabach, near Nuremberg (1505–1508) and the Church of Saint James in Rothenburg (1466). A later example from Roth, south east of Würzburg, dated 1513 and attributed to Hans Strüb, can be found in the Reissmuseum in Mannheim.

34. Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 162–163.

35. Christiane Haeseler, 'Zur Restaurierung des Schöllenbacher Altares', *Denkmalpflege Kulturgeschichte, Herausgegeben vom Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Hesse* (4–2010), 6.

36. It is however, rather unusual to find dates expressed in roman numerals on German altarpieces. See Robert Suckale, *Die Erneuerung der Malkunst vor Dürer*, Band 1, Teil VI.I, Kapitel 2: 'Datierungsinschriten' (Petersberg Bamberg: Imhof; Selbstverlag des Historischen Vereins Bamberg, 2009), 401–405. He gives no examples where roman numerals are used.

37. Baxandall, *Limewood Sculptors*, 23.

38. Rudolf Schnellbach, *Spägotische Plastik im unteren Neckargebiet* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1931), 89–91.

39. Tilman Riemenshneider was an active master in Würzburg from 1485 to the mid 1520s. See Baxandall, *Limewood Sculptors*, 18–19. Würzburg lies approximately one hundred kilometres east of Erbach.

40. Ulm, along with Augsburg, Strassburg and Nuremburg, was one of the main metropolitan centres of the region. Baxandall, *Limewood Sculptors*, 6.

41. See Baxandall, *Limewood Sculptors*, 18 and 255–258.

42. For an examination of the Blaubeuren altarpiece see Anna Moraht-Fromm and Wolfgang Schürle eds., *Kloster Blaubeuren: der Chor und sein Hochaltar* (Stuttgart: Theiss, 2002), 131–243. The altarpiece has also been described with detailed photographs in Kahsnitz and Bunz, *Carved Altarpieces*, 180–207.

43. Bartholomäus Zeitblom (c.1450–1519) was born in Nordlingen and recorded in Ulm from 1482–1518.

44. See Antje-Fee Köllermann, *Conrad Laib, Ein spätgotischer Maler aus Schwaben in Salzburg* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag Für Kunstwissenschaft, 2007), 42–59 and, Ulrich Söding, 'Conrad Laib und sein werk anmerkungen zur chronologie', in *Conrad Laib*, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Exh. Cat. (Wien: Ö sterreichische Galerie Belvedere, 1997), 27–31.

45. Although it is also possible that the artist used for his model a copperplate engraving that incorporates this detail, which was executed by Israhel van Meckenem in Augsburg in c.1495–1500. See Friedrich Wilhelm Heinrich Hollstein, *German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts, 1400–1700* (Amsterdam: van Gendt and Co, 1954), Vol. 24, No. 51. It has been suggested that Meckenem commissioned designs from Holbein. Holbein could therefore be the source of the engraving. See Fritz Koreny, 'Per universam Europam: German Prints and Printmaking Before 1500', in Mark McDonald ed., *The Print Collection of Ferdinand Columbus (1488–1539): A Renaissance Collector in Seville* (London: British Museum Press, 2004), Vol. 1, 170.

46. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachische Stammtafel*, 281.

47. Identified by Christiane Haeseler.

48. The tradition of depicting Moses with horns derives from the Vulgate use of the word '*cornuta*' (horned) to describe Moses's face when he descends from Mount Sinai with the tablets of the Law, Exodus 34:29. A similar representation can be found on the choir stalls in the Tübingen Stiftskirche. Aaron is often shown wearing a mitre or papal tiara to denote that he is a prefiguration of the Christian priesthood.

49. A precedent for this type of representation can be found in Hartmann Schedel's *Weltchronik*, published in Nuremberg in 1493. The third part describes the history of the world from Abraham to King David, and both folios 37v and 41v depict high priests with crescent moons on the front of their mitres.

50. The subject matter would be dictated by the donors and would have formed part of the written contract with the workshop. For examples of contracts see Huth, *Künstler und Werkstatt der Spätgotik*, 108–139 and Hans Rott, *Quellen und Forschungen zur südwestdeutschen und schweizerischen Kunstgeschichte im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Strecker & Schrö der Verlag 1933–38).

51. See for example the sixteenth century predella of the Virgin Mary Altarpiece, Saint Martin's church, Tauberbischofsheim, attributed to Riemenschneider's workshop; the predella of the Saint Anne Chapel Altarpiece, Saint Nicholas in Gundelsheim, near Heilbronn (c.1490); the predella of the altarpiece on the high altar of Saint Mary's church, Blaustein–Wippingen, near Ulm (c.1505); the altarpiece in the Heilig-Kreuz-Münster in Schwäbisch Gmünd (c.1510); the altarpiece currently in the Saint Francis Xavier chapel in Bieselbach, near Augsburg (1510); the Bäckeraltar in Braunau (1480–86), and the altarpiece on the high altar in the church of Saint Vincent in Heiligenblut, Carinthia (c.1520). In addition, Veit Stoss, who was born in Swabia and settled in Nuremberg, travelled to Kraków in 1477 to undertake the monumental carved and polychromed Saint Mary

altarpiece, which also has a Tree of Jesse in the predella.

52. Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King, Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 63–71. For a discussion of genealogy as a medieval mental structure, reflected in historical writing, language, theology and the arts, see R. Howard Bloch, 'Genealogy as a Medieval Mental Structure and Textual Form', in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht ed., *La Litterature Historiographique des Origines à 1500* (*Grundriss der Romanischen Literaturen des Mittelalters*, Band XI/1) (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1986), 135–156. For a history of genealogical tree imagery see Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Genesis of the Family Tree', *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance*, Vol. 4 (1991), 105–129 and Andrea Worm, '*Arbor autem humanum genus significat*: Trees of Genealogy and Sacred History in the Twelfth Century', in Pippa Salonius and Andrea Worm eds., *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory and Mnemonic Device in Medieval Art and Thought*, International Medieval Research 20 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 35–67.

53. Thérèse B. McGuire, 'The Symbol of Power in Suger's Tree of Jesse', in Martin Gosman, Arjo Vanderjagt and Jan Veenstra eds., *The Propagation of Power in the Medieval West*, Selected Proceedings of the International Conference, November 1996 (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1997) and James R. Johnson, 'The Tree of Jesse Window of Chartres', *Speculum*, Vol. 36 (1961), 1–22. See also Marigold A. Norbye, 'Arbor Genealogiae: Manifestations of the Tree in French Royal Genealogies', in Salonius and Worm eds., *The Tree: Symbol, Allegory and Mnemonic Device*, 69–93.

54. Gary B. Blumenshine, 'Monarchy and Symbol in Later Medieval France—The Tree of Jesse Window at Evreux', *Fifteenth Century Studies*, Vol. 9 (1984), 19–57.

55. For a discussion of genealogy as ideology in the court of Maximilian see Larry Silver, *Marketing Maximilian: The Visual Ideology of a Holy Roman Emperor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2008), 41–76.

56. Ann M. Roberts, 'The Chronology and Political Significance of the Tomb of Mary of Burgundy', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (September 1989), 376–400.

57. When George, Duke of Saxony, commissioned the Saint Anne altarpiece for the main altar of the Church of Saint Anne in Annaberg-Bucholz (Figure 2.6), he also incorporated heraldic shields, thereby associating the dynastic prestige of his family with the genealogy of Christ.

58. See the family genealogical tree in Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachsche Stammtafel*. Additions and corrections were made by Johann Philipp Wilhelm Luck, *Historische Genealogie des reichsgraflichen Hauses Erbach, die als Zusätze und Verbesserungen zu D. Schneiders im Jahre 1736 herausgegebenen Erbachischen Historie und auch als ein eigenes Werk gebraucht werden kann* (Frankfurt am Main, 1786).

59. See Luck, *Historische Genealogie*. Einhard and his wife were originally buried in a sarcophagus in the choir of the church in Seligenstadt, but in 1810 the sarcophagus was presented by the Grand Duke of Hesse to the Count of Erbach, who placed it in the Hubert Chapel.

60. This copy of the *Vita et Gesti Karoli Magn* i (B89, VD 16 E 726) can be found in the Nicolaus-Matz-Bibliothek (Kirchenbibliothek) in Michelstadt.

61. Calculations of infant mortality are bound to be speculative, however, it has been suggested that more than 20% of children died in their first year and only half of those born reached the age of five. See Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London:

Routledge, 1990), 149–150.

62. Schneider, *Vollständige hochgräflich Erbachsche Stammtafel*, 280, and the Max Walter Archiv, 22/80 (1949), in the Institute for Volkskunde at the University of Würzburg. '*Die Kinder kommen dabei aus dem Schollenbacher Brunnen'*. It seems that the water from the spring was still used to baptise members of the Erbach family well into the twentieth century (Max Walter Archiv, 22/120).

63. Brandenbarg, 'Saint Anne, A Holy Grandmother and Her Children', 56 and n.58.

64. See London, BL, Sloane MS 3564, fols 55r-v, translated in L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood*, 57, n.55.

65. Luke 1:36 'And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren'. L'Estrange, who conducted an analysis of late medieval prayers for labour, surmised that the consistent recurrence of Saint Anne, Saint Elizabeth and the Virgin, indicates that the mothers of the Holy Kinship were not only important in asking for help in the conception of heirs, but also that their invocation played a central role during labour itself. See L'Estrange, *Holy Motherhood*, 67.

66. Precedents for the depiction of Elizabeth on the right side of the Virgin can be found in the Visitation miniature from the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, c.1440 (Morgan Library, NY, M.945, fol.32r) and the Visitation panel from the Schottenstift Altarpiece, 1469, in the Schottenstift Church, Vienna.

67. See Webb, *Medieval European Pilgrimage*, 96.

68. Although no evidence of a pilgrims' footbath has been found at the site, medieval foot-baths have been discovered at other pilgrimage sites in Scotland and Ireland (Iona and Innismurray).

69. See for example the Ehningen Altarpiece (1482) and the wings of the Monfort-Werdenberg altarpiece (1465) in the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. The Kreuzigung Christi mit Heiligen Altarpiece by the Master of the Madonna Ilsung (c.1485) in the Deutsches Historisches Museum in Berlin features both the Annunciation and the Visitation on the exterior of the wings; unfortunately the original location of this work is not known.

70. For a discussion of the depiction of the Annunciation on the exterior wings of altarpieces, see Molly Teasdale-Smith, 'The Use of Grisaille as a Lenten Observance', in *Marsyas Studies in the History of Art*, Vol. VIII. (New York: New York University, 1959), 43–54.

71. For further information regarding the history of this chapel see Schreiber, *Wallfahrten durchs deutsche Land*, 490; Walter Hotz, *Amorbach, Das Marienmünster im Odenwald* (Berlin: Rambrandt-Verlag, 1938), 6; Walter Hotz, *Amorbacher Cicerone* (Amorbach: Hermann Emig, 1959) (rev. 1976), 117–121; Max Walter, *Die ehemalige Abteikirche in Amorbach* (Amorbach: Fü rstlich Leiningensche Verwaltung, 1979), 46; H. Dünninger, '*Sancti amoris fons*, Volkskundliches zur Geschichte des Quellheiligtums Amorsbrunn', in Friedrich Oswald and Wilhelm Störmer eds., *Die Abtei Amorbach im Odenwald* (Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1984), and Wand, *Mittelalterliche Einsiedeleien*, 36.

5
The Tree of Jesse and Antwerp Carved Altarpieces

In addition to its use in southern German retables, the Tree of Jesse motif can be found in a large number of Antwerp carved altarpieces of the early sixteenth century, yet this has never been investigated as part of an iconographical study.[1] In order to try to establish why the theme became such a speciality of some southern Netherlandish workshops, this chapter will adopt a slightly different approach to the earlier ones. It will begin with a brief consideration of the nature of the Antwerp art market, followed by an examination of how the Tree of Jesse was typically employed by carvers. It will then focus on three works: the Pailhe, Bocholt and Gifhorn altarpieces, which all feature the subject at the centre of the *caisse*. Although the Bocholt retable was exhibited as part of the 1993 Antwerp Altarpiece Exhibition, and the Pailhe retable was the subject of an article by Ria de Boodt in 1996, there is little other recent literature regarding these works, and they have never been considered in relation to their specific subject matter.[2] Previous scholarship has tended to assume that, in order to speed up production, there was a great degree of standardisation between Antwerp altarpieces. A detailed analysis of these works will try to ascertain to what extent this hypothesis might be true, proposing, at least with regard to these particular examples, that this theory may be overly reductive.

The function of Tree of Jesse iconography in Antwerp altarpieces will then be considered in light of contemporary theological concerns, particularly the Lutheran doctrine of the Theology of the Cross. It will be argued that Luther's teachings must have had an impact on many of the iconographic choices made by patrons sympathetic to his ideas, both at home and abroad. In addition, the possibility of a link between Antwerp Tree of Jesse altarpieces and the Advent liturgy will also be explored. It is hoped that the examination of physical and iconographic evidence, presented in this chapter, will contribute to the debate regarding the production, patronage and function of Antwerp altarpieces.

Decline in the demand for cloth from the southern Netherlands in the fourteenth century forced many towns to diversify and, by the early fifteenth

century, the cities of Brabant had developed as major centres of the manufacture, sale and distribution of luxury goods, including carved altarpieces.[3] Initially, the carved altarpiece industry was dominated by Brussels, although this was to change with the growth of Antwerp's economy.[4] Encouraged to a great extent by the large number of foreign merchants who visited the city to attend its biannual trade fairs, by the 1470s Antwerp had become a significant centre of production.[5] Works of art were sold at the specialised public art market, Our Lady's Pand, a purpose-built building in the grounds of the church of Our Lady. From 1484, a municipal decree was issued that prohibited the sale of art during the fairs at any other location.[6] The Pand made it easy for clients to purchase small and easily transportable objects on spec, and it seems that merchants or dealers may have frequently bought works in quantity for resale.[7] Larger works, such as carved wooden altarpieces, could also be purchased at the Pand and, in addition to local demand, it appears that customers may have travelled some distance. This is evident from the widespread distribution of surviving altarpieces, which can be found predominantly in Germany, particularly in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, but also as far afield as Sweden, Denmark and Poland, reaching their destinations via the internal waterways and roads that linked up with the major shipping routes.[8]

The introduction of the Antwerp open hand carver's mark as a visible sign of authenticity and quality was first introduced in 1470, and can be found branded onto the heads of some of the figures in the *caisse*, or onto the base of some of the carved sections. A further stamp, the municipal coat of arms, which is comprised of a castle with two small hands above it, was stamped on to the side of the *caisse* as a guarantee for the polychromy of the finished work. To date, one hundred and seventy-nine surviving Antwerp altarpieces have been identified, and these marks have proved invaluable in establishing the provenance of the vast majority of works.[9] Although these retables only represent a fraction of the original output, a very high percentage (22%) have, or had, some kind of representation of the Tree of Jesse in their carved *caisse* (Appendix 2.1). This is clearly significant, as by comparison a catalogue of sixty-eight Brussels altarpieces does not feature a single example of a carved Tree of Jesse.[10] This discrepancy may be partly explained by the more formulaic structure of Antwerp altarpieces. Like the Brussels retables, the Antwerp *caisse* was usually divided into three vertical bays of virtually equal width, the central bay usually a third, or sometimes a half, taller than those flanking it. However, unlike the majority of Brussels altarpieces, it became fashionable, in the course of the sixteenth century, for the Antwerp *caisse* to be divided again on a horizontal access, creating a minimum of six compartments. The compartments on the side bays are of approximately equal

height, yet the subdivision of the central bay usually creates a narrower lower compartment beneath a much taller upper compartment. This arrangement suited the vertical nature of the Tree of Jesse motif, where Jesse is commonly depicted in the compartment of the lower register, with the branches of the tree acting as a framing device for the principal subject in the upper register. In this way the carver could link the subjects of the lower and upper *caisse*, while the motif's decorative qualities provided a complex and visually pleasing effect. There is an obvious affinity between the Tree of Jesse and its depiction in carved wood and, although technically complex, the organic nature of the subject lends itself to this three dimensional medium. The carver is therefore given the opportunity to display his skill, not only enhancing the appearance of the work, but also adding to its meaning.

Approximately one third of surviving Tree of Jesse Antwerp altarpieces have imagery focused on the Virgin, with a single retable devoted to Saint Anne.[11] The large majority of remaining works depict scenes from the Passion in the upper register, as can be seen in the altarpiece in Saint Victor's Cathedral, Xanten (Figure 5.1). The most common arrangement is for the left compartment to contain the Way to Calvary, with Christ carrying his Cross, the centre to contain the Crucifixion,

Figure 5.1 Antwerp Passion Altarpiece, c.1525, Saint Victor's Cathedral, Xanten

(Photo: Ulrich Schäfer)

and the right compartment to feature the Deposition and/or the Lamentation. Jesse is depicted in the lower register and the branches of the tree, which support the royal ancestors of Christ, rise up either side of the Crucifixion. This visual connection between the Tree of Jesse, the sufferings of Christ and the Cross had its theological roots in the writings of Peter Damian, the eleventh-century monastic leader and a Doctor of the Church. Damian introduced his homily *De exaltatione Sanctae Crucis*, with the maxim '*De virga Jesse devenimus ad virgam crucis, et principium redemptionis fine concludimus*' (Out of the *'virga' of* Jesse we came to the *'virgam'* of the cross and the beginning of redemption was the conclusion). Damian saw the rod of Jesse as the beginning of the story of salvation, leading to man's redemption through the rod of the Cross.[12] This association underlines the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy and reaffirms the link between the Incarnation and Redemption; yet it seems that visual representations of the Tree of Jesse with the Crucifixion were scarce before the fifteenth century. A rare example can be found in a *Speculum humanae salvationis*, dated 1330, from the Benedictine Abbey of Kremsmünster in upper Austria, (Codex Cremefanensis 243, fol.55r) (Figure 5.2).[13] Fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century examples however can often be found on Netherlandish and German liturgical vestments, where the Tree of Jesse was embroidered onto the cross on the back of a chasuble (Figure 5.3).[14] The chasuble is the outer garment worn by the priest during the celebration of the Mass, when his back is towards the congregation. The function of this iconography was, therefore, not only to act as a reminder of the Crucifixion, which is re-enacted in the bloodless sacrament of the Mass, but also to encapsulate the whole story of salvation in a single image.

Due to the nature of the Antwerp art market during the early sixteenth century, much of the recent literature has assumed a certain degree of standardisation between carved altarpieces. It is argued that to meet demand, great efforts were made to rationalise production, with the increased use of standard sizes and models, and the division of labour within workshops based on specialisation.[15] Furthermore, it has been suggested that a standardisation of subject matter also occurred, ensuring that any altarpiece could be suitable for any altar, wherever its location, so easy to sell ready-made on the open market.[16] Lynn Jacobs has even gone as far as to suggest that more than 70% of full-sized Netherlandish altarpieces were produced without a specific buyer in mind and sold in this way.[17] The prevalence of Tree of Jesse iconography in Antwerp altar-pieces could be seen to support this argument, as the use of the motif with the Passion, or Life of the Virgin, makes coherent iconographic sense. In addition, representations tend to follow a similar format, with Jesse

seated under a tent-shaped canopy, surrounded by prophets and the tree, which supports twelve kings, crowned by the Virgin and Child.[18] It could be considered likely, therefore, that different workshops were following some sort of common model. However, even though iconographic programmes that include the Passion or Life of the Virgin, combined with the Tree of Jesse, would have been universally popular themes and in great demand, none of this necessarily precludes the personal involvement of a patron in the choice and treatment of the subject matter for their particular altarpiece. To assume that the vast majority of these large and expensive

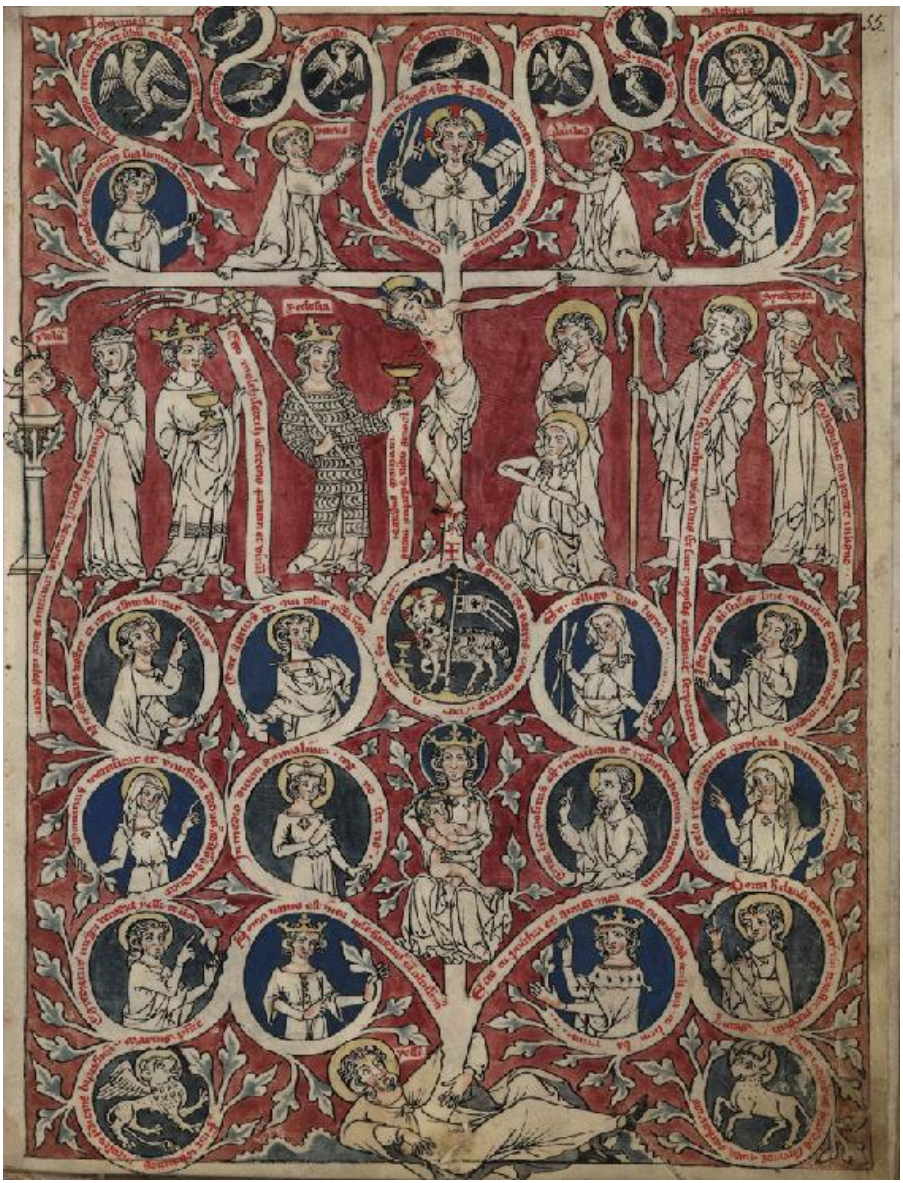


Figure 5.2 *Speculum humanae salvationis*, 1330, Benedictine Abbey of Kremsmünster

Stiftsbibliothek Kremsmünster, Austria, CC 243, fol.55r

works were created on a completely non-commissioned basis, for sale on the mass market, seems rather implausible.[19]

Figure 5.3 Chasuble, Italy (Velvet), Flanders (Embroidered Orphrey), Fifteenth Century

© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée de Cluny—Musée national du Moyen Âge)/Gérard Blot

Although Tree of Jesse iconography was usually restricted to the lower register, a detailed comparison of three surviving altarpieces, which feature the subject in the centre of the *caisse*, provides an opportunity to consider in some detail exactly how much standardisation there was between works. While ostensibly similar in subject matter, an examination of their secondary iconography also allows us to evaluate to what extent their patrons may have been involved in the final appearance of these altarpieces.

The Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe Altarpieces

The Gifhorn Altarpiece was acquired by the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum in Hannover in 1955 (Figure 5.4). The Bocholt Altarpiece is currently in the

church of Saint Laurence, Bocholt in Belgium (Figure 5.5), whilst the Pailhe Altarpiece was bought in the mid-nineteenth century by the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (Figure 5.6). The condition of each of the altarpieces is varied. Pailhe is the work best conserved in its original state, although it has been restored on three separate occasions.[20] Bocholt underwent extensive restoration in 1903–5, which involved replacing thirteen of the carved figures, and several of the other decorative details also received treatment.[21] When the Gifhorn altarpiece was described by Hector Wilhelm Mithoff in 1877, it is clear that it was already missing many of its carved figures.[22] In addition, much of the architectural decoration has been lost, and parts of the *caisse* have been replaced, although it does seem that the remaining polychromy and gilding are, on the whole, original.[23]

Physical Evidence

All three retables retain primary evidence of their Antwerp origin, although the Pailhe and Bocholt altarpieces are more comprehensively marked than the Gif-horn work. The Antwerp open hand carver's mark, made with seven different tools, has been found on seventy-five of the eighty-four carved sections of the Pailhe altarpiece, the majority clearly visible on the heads of the figures.[24] Fur thermore, the municipal coat of arms (a double hand and castle) can also be found on the exterior left-hand side of the *caisse*, establishing beyond doubt its Antwerp provenance. The origin of the Bocholt altarpiece is also incontrovertible: the double hand and castle has been preserved on the back of the restored wooden facing, and the Antwerp open hand can be observed on seven of the carved sculptural groups. The origin of the Gifhorn altarpiece is slightly more problematic: although the municipal coat of arms has been identified on the frame, no marks can be observed on any of the remaining carved figures.[25] Nevertheless, it is generally accepted on stylistic grounds that these too are of Antwerp origin and original to the work.

Figure 5.4 The Gifhorn Antwerp Altarpiece, c.1510–20

(Size of *Caisse:* 193 × 187 cm) © Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, Hannover (Photo: Susan Green)

Establishing the first owners of these retables is less straightforward. Prior to being acquired by the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum in Hannover, the Gifhorn altarpiece had been in the possession of the Welfen family, who themselves had acquired it from the estate of Castle Gifhorn in c.1863.[26] It is extremely unlikely, however, that the altarpiece was originally purchased for Gifhorn, as a fire in 1519, which burnt much of the castle and estate, would have also almost certainly destroyed it.[27] In addition, the chapel to the castle was not built until c.1547. Consequently, it is more likely that the altarpiece was acquired for another location and moved to Gifhorn sometime after this date. Even so, it does seem possible that the altarpiece was originally obtained for a German church or chapel, as more than a third of all surviving Antwerp altarpieces can still be found in Germany, with the

Figure 5.5 The Bocholt Antwerp Altarpiece, c.1525–30, Church of Saint Laurence, Bocholt, Belgium

(Size of *Caisse:* 276 × 246 × 36 cm) (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

majority of Tree of Jesse altarpieces found in the region between the Rhine and the Meuse, particularly along the route to Cologne, with another large cluster in the Julich area.[28]

Figure 5.6 The Pailhe Antwerp Altarpiece, c.1510–30

(Size of *Caisse:* 260 × 239 × 28 cm) Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels (Photo: © KIK-IRPA, Brussels)

The earliest piece of documentary evidence for the Bocholt altarpiece dates from 1864, when it was recorded in the Loozen Chapel, now the Velthoven Chapel, in the town of Bocholt in the north of Belgium, not far from the German border.[29] It is believed that before this it belonged to the town's main parish church, Saint Laurence, but that it was removed in the eighteenth century, when the church was re-fitted with a new Baroque altar and choir.[30] Even though the painted wings do depict Saint Laurence, it seems they are not original to the work, but are made up of five painted panels, also from the Loozen Chapel, which were added, along with a neo-Gothic predella, by Pierre Peeters during restoration in 1903–5.[31] It is believed that these panels must

have originally belonged to another, larger retable, which was dedicated to the patron saint of the parish and probably stood on the main altar.[32] If this was the case, then the Bocholt altarpiece may have resided on one of the side altars in the church. It was moved back to Saint Laurence after its restoration in 1905.

Although now in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels, the Pailhe altarpiece was in the church of the Assumption of Our Lady in Pailhe, in the province of Liege, until the mid-nineteenth century.[33] Considered unsuitable to decorate the altar of the new parish church, which was built in the neoclassical style, it was sold to the museum in 1849. Even though the Pailhe altarpiece features scenes from the Life of the Virgin and decorated the high altar of a church dedicated to the Virgin, this does not necessarily mean that it was originally acquired with this church in mind, and it may have been moved to Pailhe from another location sometime after its acquisition.[34]

Scale could give some indication of the original location of these altarpieces. However, although Gifhorn, at 193 × 187 cm, is slightly smaller than either the Bocholt or Pailhe altarpieces, which measure 276 × 246 cm and 260 × 239 cm respectively, all three are medium sized works that could have been placed on either the high altar of a small parish church or private chapel or, alternatively, on the side altar of a much larger church. The retables would have also originally been furnished with painted wings and a predella, which would have expanded their iconographic programmes. Unfortunately, all three works have lost their original predellas and Gifhorn is the only altarpiece to retain its original wings.[35] As a result, any further evidence that could have been useful in identifying the original owners or location of the works, such as coats of arms or inscriptions, is now lost.

The dating of these altarpieces is associated to a great extent with their shape and format. Gifhorn is of a traditional inverted T-shape and its elevated centre, approximately half as high again as the side sections, provides additional vertical space for the main sculptural theme. The *caisse* has been divided vertically to create three bays of approximately equal width, and the central compartment has been divided again, in the lower part, to create three separate niches. Although no dendrochronological analysis is available, this format and the style of dress on the painted wing panels support the accepted date of c.1510–20.

While still maintaining the basic T structure, the shape of carved altarpieces changed slightly from c.1515, with the application of decorative mouldings to the upper edge of the *caisse*. The curving profile of Bocholt, with its series of three ogee arches coming to a point at the top of the upper compartment, demonstrates this development. Like Gifhorn, the *caisse* was divided vertically into three bays; however, as was increasingly popular, all three bays were then divided again to create six compartments in total, the two central

compartments being both higher and wider than the two side ones. Dendrochronological analysis confirms that the tree was felled in c.1517 and, although we have no information regarding the time elapsed between the felling and completion of the carving, evidence from the study of other altarpieces suggests that it was not unusual for this to take up to ten years.[36] Despite the elaborate oriental costumes of many of the figures, their poses remain static and conventional, demonstrating none of the excesses typical of Antwerp mannerism. As this trend reached its peak just after c.1530, it appears that a date of c.1525–30 is relatively accurate for the Bocholt work, and in line with other altarpieces of a similar shape.

The shape of the Pailhe altarpiece is similar to that of Bocholt, although the raised central section has a semi-circular crown, rather than a pointed moulding, on its upper edge.[37] Once again, the *caisse* has been divided vertically into three bays, but, instead of these bays being divided horizontally to create six compartments, the central compartment has been divided again, so that there are in fact seven compartments in total. Pailhe has been dated to c.1510–30, although it has been suggested that this particular altarpiece shape did not come into fashion until the 1530s, which would place it towards the end of this period.[38] In addition, as Borch-grave d'Altena observed, Pailhe expresses many elements of the 'new manner'.[39] Several of the carved figures, such as the shepherds on either side of the Nativity, and the figure to the right of the priest in the Circumcision, display the characteristic exaggerations associated with Antwerp Mannerism in the 1530s, although other figures appear more traditional. It seems likely then that the Pailhe altarpiece is a work of the early 1530s.[40] Consequently, even though only the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe altarpieces survive today, it seems that the use of Tree of Jesse iconography as the principal subject of an Antwerp altarpiece may have remained fashionable for a period of at least ten to twenty years. Further evidence for the popularity of this arrangement is provided by the existence of several other Antwerp Jesse fragments of a similar date, whose size suggests that they also once came from the centre of a carved altarpiece *caisse*.[41]

Despite their different production dates, the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe altar-pieces share several physical characteristics.[42] For example, the compartments of each altarpiece have been similarly constructed, with steeply inclined floors and walls tilted inwards to give the impression of a realistic physical space. All have significant architectural decoration and employ specific decorative techniques. For instance, while the dominant colour inside each of the *caisses* is gold, the use of *sgraffito* engraving, in red and blue, has been used to provide elaborate borders to the draperies of the carved figures.[43] Paint has also been used for some details and to indicate the undersides of the fabrics, as well as flesh tones and facial features. In all three altarpieces,

however, it is only the male figures that have been individualised; the women tend to have rather doll-like faces, with arched eyebrows, sharp noses and receding chins.[44]

While some of the similarities in scale and technique that can be observed from a physical examination of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe altarpieces may be indicative of a certain amount of standardisation among Antwerp carvers and polychromists in the early sixteenth century, they do not provide proof of the semi-industrial level of production suggested by some authors. The presence of the Antwerp carver's mark, and/or the municipal coat of arms on all three works, also gives little indication as to whether or not they were specific commissions, as these marks can be found on the majority of Antwerp altarpieces, even the few for which the original contracts still survive.[45] Furthermore, although some tenuous conclusions can been drawn, the lack of documentary evidence means that the original owners or location of these works is unknown. Therefore, in order to establish whether or not the altarpieces were non-commissioned works, produced according to some pre-prescribed formula for sale ready-made on the open market, it is necessary to conduct a detailed comparison of their iconography.

The Iconography of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe Altarpieces

The representation of the Tree of Jesse appears relatively consistent in all three works. A bearded Jesse can be seen asleep, sitting on his chair under a tent-shaped canopy. In the Bocholt and Gifhorn altarpieces he rests his head in his left hand, while in the Pailhe altarpiece, he rests his head in his right. His other hand either grasps the base of the tree trunk that grows from his chest or rests on the arm of his chair. In the Bocholt and Pailhe works the trunk then splits into two main branches, which reach up to fill the remainder of the compartment and support the ancestors of Christ, while in the Gifhorn work the branches have been lost.

In the Pailhe altarpiece, the kings are arranged in flower blossoms; David can be identified by his attribute of a harp, while the figure opposite him wears a turban and may represent Solomon. Although only eleven kings can be seen here, visual analysis suggests that one of the smaller branches on the tree has broken off; this must have originally supported a twelfth king. Four figures with scrolls stand, two either side of Jesse; three of these figures wear archaic dress, suggesting that they are likely to represent prophets or patriarchs. Unfortunately, only the scrolls held by the figure to Jesse's immediate right is

still legible, it reads '*egredietur virga de radice jesse*', clearly indicating that he is meant to represent the prophet Isaiah. The fourth figure appears to be wearing a cope and mitre and is likely to represent Aaron.[46]

The arrangement of the kings is very similar in the Bocholt altarpiece, although the tree is given more physical space.[47] An inscription on Jesse's robe clearly relates to Isaiah's prophecy, '*Flos nat… ejus… endre… flos*' (Flower born … of him … unknown … flower) and, once again, four standing figures appear with scrolls, two either side of Jesse. Although the inscriptions on three of these scrolls are still legible, we must bear in mind that this altarpiece has undergone considerable restoration and, consequently, their authenticity may be open to question.[48] In both the Pailhe and Bocholt works, the Virgin appears as the supreme flower of the Tree, supporting the Christ Child on her lap.

Although little remains of the Jesse compartment of the Gifhorn altarpiece, it is still possible to make a comparison with the Pailhe and Bocholt works, and similarities in representation suggest that it is reasonable to assume that the branches of the tree must have once reached up into the upper part of the compartment, supporting twelve kings and, in all likelihood, crowned by a seated Virgin and Child. On the base of Jesse's robe can be seen part of the angelic salutation '*R.A. G… PLENA DOMINUS TE*', more commonly reserved for depictions of the Annunciation. However, as these words also form part of the rosary cycle of prayers, they may be indicative of a special devotion of the donor's.[49] Once again, the figures either side of Jesse hold scrolls. The inscription on the scroll held by the figure to Jesse's right reads '*egredietur virga de radice jesse*', identifying him as Isaiah, while the figure to Jesse's left is dressed in a cope and mitre, and is therefore probably meant to represent Aaron. The text on his scroll is taken from Amos 9:13 and reads '*stillabunt montes dulcedinem*'.[50] It seems likely, therefore, based on the Bocholt and Pailhe representations, that there were originally four figures in total. Small figurative scenes would have also once appeared in the now empty niches beneath the central Jesse compartment.[51]

From this comparison we can see that the representation of the Tree of Jesse is similar in each of the altarpieces, despite their different production dates. While this does seem to suggest the use of a common model, the depictions are not completely identical, implying the carver was able to exercise some artistic freedom. Comparison of the subject matter of the secondary scenes in each retable also identifies several similarities. For example, the Circumcision appears in all three works and is depicted in a fairly uniform manner. The week-old Christ can be seen on an altar, held by the Virgin, while a priest operates with a very large knife. The figures of the Pailhe group, however, are more expressive than those of the Bocholt group, while the Gifhorn group has lost most of its original polychromy and gilding, and all the secondary figures

are missing. It also appears that the three works once featured the Nativity, but the Pailhe composition is the only group to retain all its original figures. In the Bocholt work, the Virgin and Child, as well as the shepherd in the background on the left, are twentieth-century replacements, and little remains in the Gifhorn compartment other than a relief carving of the Procession of the Kings on the back wall.[52] In addition to the Nativity and Circumcision, both the Pailhe and Bocholt works feature representations of the Adoration of the Magi, Christ's Presentation in the Temple and the Death of the Virgin. These follow standard depictions of the subject, and all the primary figures tend to display similar characteristics, although the arrangement of the secondary figures is quite different.[53]

While there is nothing that is particularly extraordinary about these secondary scenes, the Pailhe altarpiece, with its complex visual narrative and its extra compartment at the top of the central bay containing the Crucifixion, may well reflect the specifications of a special commission. The Crucifixion is positioned directly above the Tree of Jesse, which in turn appears above the Nativity; this is an unusual juxta-position of themes (Appendix 2.2).[54] Furthermore, the scenes in the compartments of the side bays predominantly combine episodes from the childhood of Christ in which Mary is also an important figure: the Adoration of the Magi, the Circumcision and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. The inclusion of the Death of the Virgin within this cycle seems rather incongruous. The Crucifixion is the most important scene in Passion altarpieces; while the Death of the Virgin, often combined with the Assumption, fulfils this role in Marian altarpieces, to have both together is a rare occurrence. When considering how the Pailhe altarpiece should be viewed, it appears that the vertical central axis is designed to be read from bottom to top, while the narrative sequence in the secondary compartments reads counterclockwise: from the Circumcision to the Death of the Virgin. Conversely, six small figurative scenes that can be seen in the recesses are designed to be read clockwise: from the Marriage of the Virgin to the Angel appearing to Joseph, presumably advising the Return to Nazareth.[55] This atypical division of compartments, in conjunction with the curious arrangement of subjects, appears to be unique.[56]

Examination of the Bocholt altarpiece reveals that its narrative deviates from Pailhe in two main respects: its exclusion of the Crucifixion and its arrangement of scenes (Appendix 2.3). The Death of the Virgin is given prominence, beneath the Tree of Jesse in the central compartment of the lower register, while the Nativity is moved to the side. The main emphasis of this work is focused on the Virgin and her unique role in the salvific process; following her death and assumption, she can be seen crowning the Tree of Jesse as Queen of Heaven.[57] The obvious inclusion of rosary beads, which are

held by several of the figures in the Death of the Virgin compartment, may again imply the involvement of a patron, perhaps indicating that the altarpiece was commissioned for a confraternity associated with this particular cult. As with the Pailhe altarpiece, the central bay is designed to be read vertically from bottom to top. However, the sequence of the secondary scenes, which start from the left and move to the right side of the altarpiece, is also read vertically, although in this instance from top to bottom.

Although the Gifhorn altarpiece is in a very dilapidated state, the existence of the original painted wings provides useful information regarding the overall icono-graphic programme of the work (Appendix 2.4). The wings consist of two panels hinged together on either side of the *caisse*, with two smaller wings attached to the top extension of the raised central section. The scale of the figures on the wings is much larger than those of the *caisse* and both present events in a different physical space, although this disparity is not uncommon. The two panels on the left wing depict the Presentation and Marriage of the Virgin, while the upper wing depicts the Birth of the Virgin. The right-hand wing depicts Christ's Presentation in the Temple and the Massacre of the Innocents, while the top features the Flight into Egypt. Designed to be read from left to right when open, the wings on the left depict episodes from the Life of the Virgin, leading to the Nativity, while those on the right depict episodes from the Life of Christ following his Circumcision. The Tree of Jesse, the genealogical tree of both Christ and His mother at the centre of the *caisse*, gives a theological coherence to the work. The representation of the Massacre of the Innocents, derived from the text in Matthew 2:16–18, is not only a rare theme in Antwerp altarpieces, but also presents an iconographical peculiarity.[58] Usually the mothers of the murdered children are portrayed grief stricken, pleading and lamenting, whereas here, a mother has her child's murderer by the hair and is beating him with her shoe. It has been suggested that these paintings may be related to the circle of Goswijn (Goossen) van der Weyden, who was active in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century, although it is also possible that the wings were commissioned from a German artist and attached at a later date.[59] Possible evidence of a German origin for these wings is provided by a panel painting of the Massacre of the Innocents, dated 1462, attributed to the Master of the Freising Visitation, which also features a mother attacking the murderer of her children.[60] Whatever the source, this unusual iconography may well reflect the input of a patron, perhaps with a special devotion to the Holy Innocents.[61]

Consequently, despite the many similarities between the iconography of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe works, there are also many disparities, which may be a reflection of the individual requirements of their patrons. Even with their differing dates of production, however, similarities in representation and

subject matter do support the premise that workshops were using common models.[62] It may be the case, therefore, that ready-made sections were combined with customised elements. The modular format of the *caisse* meant this could be easily implemented, and works could have also had specially commissioned wings and a predella, which may or may not have been executed in Antwerp.[63] A patron could select different elements of the altarpiece according to his own iconographic preferences and the amount he wished to spend, and a ready-made work in the marketplace could have acted primarily as a sample of a workshop's production. This theory may be supported by an entry that appeared in the accounts of the Brotherhood of Our Lady,'s-Hertogenbosch (1475–6), which discusses the preparations for the commission of a new altarpiece for the chapel of the Brotherhood. Folio 207v states that a panel was inspected in Antwerp, 'to decide whether we wanted to have a similar one made'.[64]

The Function of the Tree of Jesse Motif in Antwerp Altarpieces

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, there had been renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography across a wide range of media, in the Low Countries and Germany, by the early sixteenth century, linked to the cult of the Virgin and escalating devotion to her mother, Saint Anne. Its adoption by Antwerp carvers in altarpieces devoted to the Virgin can be seen as part of this overall phenomenon, where the function of the motif is to confirm the Mother of Christ's Davidic ancestry and highlight her role in the Incarnation, the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. However, it seems that the motif can most often be found in altarpieces focused on the Passion. The popularity of these Antwerp Passion altarpieces may, therefore, be partly a reflection of contemporary theological concerns.

Luther's *Theologia Crucis*, Theology of the Cross, was first fully articulated in the Heidelberg Disputation of 1518, and became a fundamental doctrine of the Lutheran church.[65] Luther stated that it is only in the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ on the Cross that God is revealed, and argued that through this meditation the believer would be able to understand the extent of human sin and the generosity of divine redemption. The Cross was the foundation and focus of Lutheran faith and worship, and it seems likely that this would have had an impact on the iconographic choices made by German patrons sympathetic to these ideas.[66] In addition, Antwerp's exceptional economic

growth at the beginning of the sixteenth century had also witnessed an equally spectacular rise in its printing activities, and it was not long before the commercial potential of Lutheran texts was recognised by the city's printers.[67] During the winter of 1520–21, one press alone published five works by Luther, and by 1524 many more of Luther's works had appeared in Dutch. This, combined with the urban character of Antwerp, which was a natural breeding ground for new ideas, meant that as early as 1519 Luther had gained many followers there.[68] It is not a coincidence that more than 60% (one hundred and twelve) of the one hundred and seventy-nine surviving Antwerp altarpieces feature the Passion, and it seems probable that both Antwerp carvers and their customers, at home and abroad, were influenced by Luther's Theology of the Cross. In Passion altarpieces, where Jesse occupies the central compartment of the lower register, scenes of the Nativity and Infancy of Christ usually appear on either side. The branches of the tree then rise up to frame the Crucifixion, which is flanked by other scenes of the Passion. As with the conflation of these themes on the back of a chasuble, these Antwerp altarpieces not only highlight the humanity of Christ, but also encapsulate the whole story of salvation in a single image. On Sundays and feast days, when the altarpiece stood open during the celebration of the Mass, the congregation were reminded of the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy and of Christ's ultimate sacrifice for the sake of mankind.

Although there were no rules about the form or content of carved altarpieces, their primary role was to support the liturgy and convey the message of the Gospels.[69] These altarpieces had to function throughout the ecclesiastical year and be appropriate to the celebration of all the major Christian feasts. However, detailed examination of the iconography of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe retables suggests that these works may be designed around the season of Advent, which marked the beginning of the liturgical calendar. For example, the text on Jesse's robe in the Gifhorn altarpiece, the angelic salutation, is clearly associated with the Nativity, and the inscription on Aaron's scroll, 'the mountains shall drop sweetness', can also be seen to refer to the *Rorate Caeli*, the words of Isaiah used daily throughout Advent.[70] Furthermore, the inclusion of the text from Micah 5:2 on the Bocholt altarpiece which prophesises that a promised ruler will come from Bethlehem is frequently used in the Advent and Christmas liturgy.[71]

Advent began on the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day and lasted until Christmas Eve; this was followed by a series of feasts, the most important of which was the Nativity on the 25th December. After this there was the celebration of the Holy Innocents on the 28th December, Christ's Circumcision on the 1st January[72] and the Epiphany on the 6th January, which commemorated the manifestation of Christ, beginning with the revelation to

the Magi. The last feast in the sequence, on the 2nd February, celebrated Christ's Presentation in the Temple. The proximity of these feasts in the liturgical calendar seems to have led to their association with Advent and Christ's incarnation, clearly reflected in the scenes represented within the three altarpieces. The *caisse* of the Gifhorn work features the Nativity and Circumcision, while the Massacre of the Holy Innocents, the Presentation of Christ and the Adoration of the Magi appear on the painted wings. The Bocholt and Pailhe altarpieces, although they exclude the Massacre of the Holy Innocents, feature the other four scenes within their carved *caisses*. In addition, given its association with the Tree of Jesse, it seems significant that the Feast of the Conception of the Virgin also fell during Advent, on the 8th December, although its lack of scriptural foundation meant that it was suppressed by the Lutheran church.[73]

The textual basis for the altarpieces' imagery fundamentally derives from the Gospels of Saint Matthew and Saint Luke, which both also describe Christ's genealogy, although neither covers all the events. It appears, therefore, that the function of these altarpieces may have been to provide the viewer with a more comprehensive and ordered version of the narrative than is portrayed in either of the Gospels. In this context, the use of the Tree of Jesse is also relevant. The prophecy of Isaiah is directly connected with the Advent liturgy, and the Lesson on the second Sunday of Advent is taken from Saint Jerome's commentary, in which he interprets the Virgin as 'the rod out of the root of Jesse'. During Vespers in the last week of Advent, the Tree of Jesse is recalled once again in one of the Greater Antiphons, *O Radix Jesse*.[74] The presence of the prophets, depicted on either side of Jesse, may also be seen as a reference to Advent and Christmas, evoking the dramatic tradition of the Procession of the Prophets, which usually took place during Matins on Christmas Day. This involved each prophet being summoned by the choir or preacher to deliver his prophecy in the middle of the nave, and it always included the prophecy of Isaiah.[75]

Although the interior of the altarpieces would have been seen only on Sundays and feast days, the iconography on the exterior of the wings would normally act as a reminder to the congregation of the Incarnation and Epiphany. This is demonstrated by the depiction of the Adoration of the Magi on the exterior of the Gifhorn wings, and it may be that the Bocholt and Pailhe altarpieces also featured similar iconography on the exteriors of their wings. Unfortunately, with the loss of the wings and predellas it is difficult to draw any further conclusions as to how these altarpieces might have functioned in relation to the liturgical year. It is also hard to understand how the inclusion of the Death of the Virgin relates to the Advent theme, although it may be significant that the Assumption of the Virgin, on the 15th August, was one of

the few Marian festivals retained by the Lutheran church.

Conclusion

Of the one hundred and seventy-nine surviving Antwerp carved altarpieces dating from the early sixteenth century, 22% have, or had, some kind of representation of the Tree of Jesse. Approximately one third of these Tree of Jesse altarpieces are devoted to the Virgin, although the vast majority feature the Passion. Typically, Jesse appears in the lower register of the *caisse*, with the tree framing the Crucifixion in the upper register. With their multi-compartmental format, the Antwerp altarpieces were thus able to encompass the two major themes of Christian doctrine (Incarnation and Salvation), while the Tree of Jesse provided a coherent and decorative visual device to link the two subjects. Examination of the iconography of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe retables also suggests that some of these works may have been particularly designed around the season of Advent, which marked the beginning of the liturgical year.

The popularity of Passion altarpieces in the early sixteenth century may be a reflection of contemporary interest in Luther's Theology of the Cross, which could have influenced the iconographic choices made by patrons sympathetic to Lutheranism. Moreover, although iconic elements were not completely excluded by Luther's teachings, the popularity of these altarpieces may have also been related to changing ideas regarding the use of religious imagery. The fashion in Germany for altarpieces that consisted of a series of life-size statues of the holy figures was attracting criticism from reformers. Antwerp carved altarpieces, with their small narrative scenes, must have seemed a pleasing and less controversial option for patrons.[76] In addition, the extensive use of gold within the *caisse* meant that the miniaturised images could not be perceived of as real and, with the inclusion of typological motifs such as the Tree of Jesse, there was no danger of them being misconstrued.

Similarities in construction and subject matter have led to the assumption that, in order to speed up production, there was a great deal of standardisation between Antwerp altarpieces. A detailed study of the Bocholt, Pailhe and Gifhorn works, where the Tree of Jesse appears in the centre of the *caisse*, provides a useful opportunity to test this hypothesis. All three works originated in Antwerp between c.1510 and c.1530. Not only does the physical evidence reveal original markings that identify them, but also all three share similar physical characteristics. However, due to losses, any evidence that

might have provided information regarding the original ownership or location of the works is missing, and their iconographic programmes are also incomplete. Nevertheless, although similarities do indicate that common workshop models were used over a period of at least ten to twenty years, significant differences also suggest that these altarpieces may have been modified to suit the specific iconographic requirements of a patron. The complex visual narrative of the Pailhe altarpiece seems unique, while the prominent display of rosary beads in the Bocholt work implies that its patron may have been associated with that particular cult. Furthermore, the angelic salutation found on the hem of Jesse's robe and the unusual iconography of the Massacre of the Innocents on the painted wings of the Gifhorn work could also be significant. It seems that it may be the case that rather than workshops producing ready-made altarpieces for sale on the open market, it was more commonplace for ready-made sections to be combined with customised elements, creating a unique altarpiece that was made to order.

The popularity of the Tree of Jesse motif among Antwerp carvers and their patrons in the early sixteenth century can, therefore, be explained by the fact that it was an extremely useful and decorative tool, one highly suited to the structure of Antwerp altarpieces, that could be used to link together the iconographic elements of the carved *caisse*. Ultimately, however, the progress of the Reformation, particularly in Germany and Sweden, led to a reduction in demand for Antwerp altarpieces and, following the iconoclastic fury in Antwerp in 1566, the local market was also affected. Elsewhere, carved altarpieces were increasingly considered old fashioned and contemporary taste turned in favour of painted triptychs or Italian models.[77]

Notes

1. These works were, however, the subject of this author's master's thesis, Susan L. Green, *'O Radix Jesse': The function of the Tree of Jesse motif in three Antwerp carved altar-pieces of the early sixteenth century* (MA Thesis: Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 2007).
2. Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries* and Ria de Boodt, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van de iconografie en de historiek van het Antwerps retabel van Pailhe (ca.1510–1530)', *Bulletin des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Parc du Cinquantenaire, Bruxelles, Vol. 67 (1996), 121–133.
3. See Susie Nash, 'Centres', in *Northern Renaissance Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 71–85.
4. Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries*, 17.
5. The Pentecost Fair (Sinxenmarkt) began on the second Sunday before Pentecost and the

Saint Bavo's Fair (Bamismarkt) began on the second Sunday after Assumption. Typically these fairs lasted for approximately six weeks and were part of an annual cycle of fairs in Brabant. From 1468 Antwerp had repeatedly extended its fair times, becoming essentially a permanent marketplace by 1520. For more information see Léon Voet, 'Antwerp, the Metropolis and Its History', in Jan van der Stock ed., *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis, 16th–17th century*, Exh. Cat. (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1993), 14–16 and Filip Vermeylen, 'Exporting Art across the Globe, The Antwerp Art Market in the Sixteenth Century', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, Vol. 50 (1999), 13–29.

6. For full details see Dan Ewing, 'Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460–1560: Our Lady's Pand', *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (December 1990), 558–584.

7. See Lorne Campbell, 'The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the 15th Century', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 118, No. 877 (April 1976), 188–198 and, Nash, *Northern Renaissance Art*, 85.

8. Few of these altarpieces were in their current locations in the sixteenth century, but large geographical concentrations, combined with some iconographic and documentary evidence, provides proof that they were widely exported, particularly to Germany and Scandinavia. For the provenance of several of these altarpieces see Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries*. For a discussion of the specific problems that are associated with the study of carved altarpieces, including location, see Carl van de Velde, 'Art-Historical Study of Brabantine Wooden Altarpieces', in Carl van de Velde et al. eds., *Constructing Wooden Images* (Brussels: VUB Brussels University Press, 2005), 1–17.

9. For the most up-to-date inventory see Ria de Boodt and Ulrich Schäfer, *Vlaamse retabels. Een internationale reis langs laatmiddeleeuws beeldsnijwerk* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2007), 281–291. Of the one hundred and seventy-nine altarpieces identified, one hundred and fifty-seven have Antwerp marks.

10. Brigitte d'Hainaut-Zveny ed., *Miroirs du Sacré, Les Retables sculptées à Bruxelles XVe–XVIe siècles* (Brusells: CFC-É ditions, 2005). The only altarpiece to feature the iconography is the Saluces retable (Musée de la Ville, Brussels), where it appears on the closed view of the painted wings, attributed to the Brussels artist Valentin van Orley.

11. The Saint Anne altarpiece can be found in the Propsteikirche Sankt Mariae Geburt in Kempen (North Rhine-Westphalia).

12. Peter Damian, *Homilia de exaltatione sanctae crucis* (Sermo XLVIII.I) in Migne, *S.Petri Damiani Patrologia Latina*, Vol. 144, col. 761.

13. A facsimile of this manuscript, with commentary, can be found in Willibrord Neumüller, *Speculum humanae salvationis: Codex Cremifanensis 243 des Benediktinerstiftes Kremsmünster* (Graz: Akademische Drucku. Verlagsanstalt, 1997). A second early fourteenth-century example can be found in the *Bruentto Latini Le Livre du Trésor* (BL Yates Thompson 19, fol.18r).

14. Examples can be found in the Saint Viktor Cathedral Treasury, Xanten; the Münster Treasury in Essen; the parish church of Heinsberg, North Rhine-Westphalia; Saint Peter's church in Leuven; the church of Sint-Gertrudis, Machelen; the church of Saint Lambert in Nismes; the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium in Brussels; and the Musée nationale du Moyen Âge, Paris.

15. Guild registers specifically list ornamental architectural carvers and specialist *caisse* makers. See J. van Damme, 'Omtrent het aandeel van de Antwerpse schrijnwerkers in de

retabelproduktie', in Hans Nieuwdorp ed., *Antwerpse retables, 15de–16de eeuw*, Vol. 2, Essays (Antwerp: Muzeen voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993), 54–56. The flexibility of the Antwerp Guild of Saint Luke meant that both carvers and painters belonged to the same guild, hence co-operation on works was easy to organise and artists were able to work together for mutual profit in fully integrated workshops. This was different to the situation in other cities, such as Brussels, where painters and sculptors were enrolled in different guilds and therefore competed with each other. See Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces*, 19.

16. Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces*, 19–20 and Alfons Thijs, 'Antwerp's Luxury Industries: The Pursuit of Profit and Artistic Sensitivity', in Jan van der Stock ed., *Antwerp: Story of a Metropolis, 16th–17th century* Exh. Cat. (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1993), 105.

17. She supports this argument by citing documents, including individual sales records, guild agreements and listings of non-resident sales, which she claims indicate that altarpieces were sold without commissions. Lynn Jacobs, 'The Marketing and Standardisation of South Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Limits on the Role of Patron', *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 71, No. 2 (June 1989), 208–229 and Lynn Jacobs, 'The Commissioning of Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Some Documentary Evidence', in Gregory T. Clark et al. eds., *A Tribute to Robert A. Koch, Studies in the Northern Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 83–111 (especially 104). Much of this research is discussed again in Lynn Jacobs, *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces 1380–1550, Medieval Tastes and Mass Marketing* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

18. The origin and dissemination of this form of representation is discussed in some detail in the following chapter.

19. More recent research by Natasja Peeters and Maximiliaan Martens has suggested that the quantity of Antwerp altarpieces must have been considerably smaller than proposed in previous studies and, therefore, to talk of mass production is misleading. See Natasja Peeters and Maximiliaan Martens, 'A Cutting Edge? Wood-Carvers and their Workshops in Antwerp 1453–1579', in Carl van de Velde et al. eds., *Constructing Wooden Images*, 75–92.

20. In 1940, 1969 and in 2002–2004. This final restoration returned the altarpiece to its original state as far as was possible, and the discovery of an original number system meant previous mounting errors could be corrected. See the 2004 Pailhe Conservation Report at IRPA in Brussels.

21. Pierre Peeters' 1903–5 restoration programme is quoted at length in *Antwerp Altarpieces*, 1993, 93, note 12. The altarpiece was restored again in 1953 to repair fire damage following the Second World War, and then again in 1992 in preparation for the Antwerp Altar-piece exhibition, although intervention was kept to a minimum. For a full discussion of the restoration of this altarpiece see Myriam Serck-Dewaide, 'Examen et Restauration de huit retables anversois', in Hans Nieuwdorp ed., *Antwerpse retables, 15de–16de eeuw*, Vol. 2, Essays (Antwerp: Muzeen voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993), 133–134.

22. Hector Wilhelm Mithoff, *Kunstdenkmale und Alterthümer in Hannoverschen* (Hannover: Helwing, 1877), 80. Hans Georg Gmelin notes that the altarpiece was restored by the restorer Felis in Hannover, although the museum has no record of this. Gmelin, *Spätgotische Tafelmalerei in Niedersachsen und Bremen* (Munich and Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1974), 651.

23. This was based on a physical examination with the conservator, Iris Herpers, at the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum on the 4th May, 2007.

24. An index of all these different marks can be found in the Pailhe 2004 Conservation Report

at the Institut Royal Du Patrimoine Artistique (IRPA), Parc du Cinquantenaire, Brussels.

25. Michael Wolfson, *Die deutschen und niederlandischen Gemalde bis 1550, Kritischer Katalog mit Abbildungen aller Werke bearbeitet* (Hannover: Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum, 1992), 228. This was confirmed by Ulrich Schäfer following his examination of the altar-piece in 2007.

26. Mithoff, *Kunstdenkmale und Alterthümer im Hannoverschen*, 78.

27. Gert von der Osten, *Katalog der Bildwerke in der Niedersächsischen Landesgalerie* (Munich: Bruckmann Verlag, 1957), 171.

28. As discussed in the Introduction, this pattern of survival relates to a large extent to the events of the Reformation. The Rhineland remained mostly Catholic, with some pockets of Lutheranism, which meant that on the whole the churches in this area remained un-desecrated.

29. *Bulletin des Commissions Royales d'Art et D'Archeologie*, 3, 1864, p. 435.

30. R. Kremer, 'Le Retable de Bocholt', *Bulletin des Métiers D'Art* (January 1903), 193

31. Christina Ceulemans, 'Bocholt, Virgin Mary Altarpiece', in Hans Nieuwdorp ed., *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th centuries*, Exh. Cat. (Antwerp: Muzeen voor Religieuze Kunst, 1993), 84. See also Buyle and Vanthillo, *Retables Flamands et Brabançons*, 134–135.

32. Serck-Dewaide, suggests that these wings probably came from a rectangular Brussels altar-piece of c.1510. See 'Examen et Restauration de huit retables anversois', 133.

33. Boodt, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van de iconografie', 129–130.

34. A report of a visit to the church by archdeacons from the Condroz in 1754 refers to an old altar table, a *tabula altaris est antiqua*, this has been seen by Boodt as a possible reference to a wooden retable, which may indicate that the altarpiece was on the high altar of the old church in Pailhe by the mid-eighteenth century. No other documents relating to the history of this work survive. See Boodt, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van de iconografie', 131–133.

35. The Pailhe altarpiece is displayed with neither wings nor a predella, although hinge marks on the sides of the caisse indicate that wings were once attached.

36. For details of dendrochronological analysis see Jozef Vynckier, 'Notes on the Dendrochronological Examination of Several Carved Antwerp Altarpieces From the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries', in Hans Nieuwdorp ed., *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries*, Exh. Cat., 189–191.

37. The 2004 Conservation Report at IRPA makes a comparison with the slightly later Passion altarpiece of d'Oplinter, also in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts in Brussels, suggesting its curved shape may reflect the influence of the Renaissance.

38. Nieuwdorp, *Antwerp Altarpieces 15th–16th Centuries*, 22.

39. Jospeh Borchgrave D'Altena, 'A propos du Retable de Pailhe', *Bulletin Des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Bruxelles (September–October, 1940), 114.

40. Ria de Boodt et al., have suggested that the hand of maybe three or even four carvers can be identified. See 'Reconstruction and Deconstruction: Interdisciplinary Research on the Altar-pieces of Bassine, Pailhe and Gaasbeek', in Carl Van de Velde ed., *Constructing Wooden Images*, 175.

41. A Jesse fragment at the Victoria and Albert museum in London measures 58 × 28 cm,

approximately the same size as the Jesse in the Bocholt altarpiece, see Paul Williamson, *Netherlandish Sculpture, 1450–1550* (London: V&A Publications, 2002), 88. Another Jesse fragment in the Staatliche Mussen zu Berlin measures 43 × 33 cm, *Antwerp Altar-pieces 15th–16th Centuries*, 148. A third fragment, in Groot Kasteel van Loppem in Belgium, measures 42 × 28 cm.

42. For a more detailed physical description of all three altarpieces see Green, '*O Radix Jesse*'.

43. This technique was particularly popular with Antwerp polychromists and replaced the more time consuming applied brocade technique still used by the Brussels workshops. See Myriam Serck-Dewaide, 'Support and Polychromy of Altarpieces From Brussels, Mechlin and Antwerp, Study, Comparison and Restoration', in Valerie Dorge ed., *Painted Wood: History and Conservation* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1998), 90.

44. When discussing the Passion altarpiece now at Radley College, Kim Woods has associated this female facial type with the style of the Antwerp painter Quinten Metsys, see 'Some Sixteenth-Century Antwerp Carved Wooden Altarpieces in England', *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 141, No. 1152 (March 1999), 154.

45. See for example the Saint Gregory (Holy Sacrament) Altarpiece of Averbode (1513–14) in the Musée nationale du Moyen Âge, Paris, or the Passion Altarpiece (1517–18) in the church of Saint Martin and Saint Severus, Münstermaifeld, which both have Antwerp marks. The contracts for these altarpieces are discussed in Jacobs, 'The Commissioning of Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Some Documentary Evidence', 83–111.

46. As discussed in the Introduction, Aaron often features in Tree of Jesse iconography.

47. The king holding a model church, opposite David with his harp, is likely to represent Solomon, although both figures are twentieth-century replacements.

48. The scroll held by the figure to Jesse's left reads *Septuaginta*, perhaps simply conveying that what follows is taken from the Septuagint, the oldest Greek version of the Old Testament. The scroll of the prophet in front of him, reads '*ex te mihi egredietur qui sit dominator*', referring to a text from Micah 5:2, which discusses a promised ruler coming from Bethlehem. On Jesse's right, the scroll held by the foremost prophet reads '*femina circumdabit virum*', which is taken from Jeremiah 31:22, 'for the Lord hath created a new thing upon the earth: A woman shall compass a man'. The text on the scroll of the prophet behind Jeremiah is obscured and cannot be read.

49. As discussed in Chapter Three, the cult of the rosary had spread rapidly in the latter quarter of the fifteenth century, following the foundation of the first confraternity of the rosary in Cologne in 1475.

50. Amos 9:13 'and the mountains shall drop sweetness'.

51. Incised lines on the back of the niches denoted the areas to be gilded; the visible outlines suggest that the spaces contained small sculptural groups as opposed to individual holy figures. A small statuette of Saint Peter, which appeared in the central niche prior to 1955, was presumably removed when it was discovered that it was made of poplar and therefore not original to the work.

52. It is assumed that this compartment would have originally featured a Nativity, as the Adoration of the Magi appears on the exterior of the wings.

53. The black king and his page in the Bocholt compartment are twentieth-century replacements, as is the soldier behind Joseph.

54. It has been suggested by Boodt that this may indicate that the altarpiece was commissioned for a cult with a special veneration for the Birth of Christ and the Immaculate Conception, although there is no evidence for this assumption. Boodt, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van de iconografie', 133.

55. There were originally eight recess scenes, but two are now missing.

56. Very few Antwerp altarpieces are divided in this way, although other examples are the Zülpich Saints altarpiece and the Linnich Saint Catherine altarpiece, which, in view of their specific iconography, are likely to have been commissioned works. See Boodt, 'Bijdrage tot de studie van de iconografie', 123. The Münstermaifeld Passion altarpiece, commissioned from the Antwerp sculptor Jan Genoots, also has a relatively similar seven part arrangement and features a Tree of Jesse in its lower register. See Ulrich Schäfer, 'Is It Possible to Describe the Personal Style of an Antwerp Carver', in Carl van de Velde et al. eds., *Constructing Wooden Images*, 27–50.

57. There is no scriptural foundation for the Death of the Virgin or for the Assumption, although the Feast of the Assumption, the principal feast of the Virgin, is celebrated on the 15th August, three days after her supposed death. See Thomas J. Heffernan and E. Ann Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2001, 483.

58. The feast of the Holy Innocents is celebrated on the 28th December; it was kept within the octave of Christmas because the Holy Innocents were believed to have given their lives for the newborn Saviour. It may also be significant that the Lutheran liturgy continued to recognise this feast. See Frank C. Senn, *Christian Liturgy: Catholic and Evangelical* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press), 1997, 342.

59. The object file in the museum contains letters from Friedrich Winkler in 1928, Jaap Leeuwenberg in 1953 (Conservator of the Rijkmuseum in Amsterdam) and Max Friedlander in 1954, that all suggest that the paintings may be related to the circle of Goswijn van der Weyden. Wolfson, on the other hand, believes that the panels appear to have been influenced by the style of the Master of the Saint Catherine Legend. See Wolfson, *Die deutschen und niederlandischen Gemalde bis 1550*, 229.

60. Freising is a town in Bavaria, north of Munich.

61. When closed, the exterior of all four large panels depict the Adoration of the Magi, now badly damaged, while the two small upper wings contain hovering angels. The back of the *caisse* has a painted crucifix and the sides have the remains of painted apostles. These are painted over parts of the *caisse* that have clearly been replaced at some point and, although old, cannot be original.

62. A drawing in the British Museum (Inv.1895–9–15–1005) is so similar to the Antwerp altarpiece representations of the Tree of Jesse that it may well have acted as one such model.

63. Yao-Fen You reached a similar conclusion following her study of Netherlandish altarpieces in Rhineland Germany. See 'The "Infinite Variety" of Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces', in Ethan Matt Kavaler, Frits Scholten and Joanna Woodall eds., *Netherlandish Sculpture of the 16th Century*, Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art, Vol. 67 (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 35–73.

64. A copy of these accounts can be found in Carol M. Richardson, Kim W. Woods and Michael W. Franklin eds., *Renaissance Art Reconsidered: An Anthology of Primary Sources* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing in association with the Open University, 2006), 74–75.

65. For a full discussion of the emergence of this theology between 1514 and 1519, see Alister

E. McGrath, *Luther's Theology of the Cross, Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell 2011), 201–211.

66. Although the dating of the large majority of Passion altarpieces is not precise enough to know exactly whether they came before or after the Heidelberg Disputation, Luther's ideas regarding his new theology had been formulating for many years prior to this date.

67. Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries*, 16.

68. Voet, 'Antwerp, the Metropolis and its History', 16.

69. Colum Hourihane ed., *Objects, Images and The Word, Art in the Service of the Liturgy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 5. For the function of altarpieces see also Beth Williamson, 'Altarpieces, Liturgy, and Devotion', *Speculum* 79 (2004), 341–406.

70. Isaiah 45:8: 'Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a saviour: and let justice spring up together: I the Lord have created him'.

71. Micah 5:2: 'And Thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel: and his going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity'.

72. The Circumcision was considered significant as it was the first shedding of Christ's redemptive blood.

73. Senn, *Christian Liturgy*, 344.

74. Heffernan and Matter, *The Liturgy of the Medieval Church*, 192.

75. Karl Young, 'The Procession of Prophets', in *The Drama of the Medieval Church*, Vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), 125–171.

76. Life-size statues seem to have been a particular target for the iconoclasts. The sixteenth-century historian Marcus Van Vaernewijck states repeatedly that works attacked were 'large as life'. See *Van die beroerlicke tijden in die Nederlanden en voornamelijk in Ghendt, 1566–1568* (edited by Ferdinand Vanderhaeghen), Vol. 1 (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1872), 128–131, 142, 146–147, 149, 155–156, 158, 161.

77. Thijs, 'Antwerp's Luxury Industries', 109.

6
The Tree of Jesse in Northern France

As the preceding chapters have demonstrated, there was a renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography in Germany and the Netherlands from c.1450. Previous studies, such as those by Émile Mâle and Séverine Lepape, have also identified a similar development in northern France, where the phenomenon manifested itself predominantly in a number of magnificent stained glass windows.[1] During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Tree of Jesse, with its bottom to top reading, had been a popular subject for French stained glass but, with the decline in cathedral building, comparatively few examples exist from the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. However, during the period of recovery that took place following the Hundred Years' War, a time of prosperity and stability, it seems the subject became fashionable once again, and new windows were commissioned: first in Normandy and then in Champagne and Brittany.[2] More than one hundred religious buildings in these three regions either retain a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Jesse window, or have fragments indicating that such a window was once in situ. Of these, only two windows appear in cathedrals, with the remainder found predominantly in parish churches. This chapter will examine the scale and nature of the renewed popularity of the motif in northern France, not previously considered in any great depth. As with representations in other media, it will suggest a link between the late medieval use of the Tree of Jesse motif and the dynastic aspirations of its patrons, and it will also consider the role of German and Netherlandish artists and models in the dissemination of new forms of representation.

Normandy

By the late fifteenth century, Rouen, the capital of Normandy and, after Paris, the second largest city in France, was undergoing an economic boom.[3] This was primarily due to maritime trade, and by the early sixteenth century Rouen

was one of the main centres for leather, wool and textiles in northern Europe. Financial prosperity meant that it was now possible for communities to address the damage and deterioration their parish churches had suffered during the Hundred Years' War.[4] From the 1460s until the Reformation, almost two thirds of religious buildings in the region were reconstructed or modified, and many others were given new windows.[5] With the availability of good quality glass from nearby and the presence of many skilled craftsmen, the Normandy glass-making industry was able to respond quickly to this increase in demand. In addition, Rouen and Évreux, the two main areas for window production, attracted craftsmen from other leading glass-making centres, and there was an influx of accomplished glaziers, particularly from the Netherlands.[6] Consequently, production by the end of the fifteenth century, especially in Rouen, had reached an almost proto-industrial level. The windows of Upper Normandy are far more abundant than those of Lower Normandy: altogether the Corpus Vitrearum studies record around forty Tree of Jesse windows, dating from the late 1460s to the mid-sixteenth century, still intact following the French Revolution.[7] Unfortunately, several of these windows were subsequently destroyed and many have undergone major restoration, sometimes irrevocably changing their original appearance.

Despite the fact that the majority of this new wave of Jesse windows can be found in parish churches, one of the earliest was executed for the cathedral of Notre-Dame in Évreux (Figure 6.1).[8] This window was donated by Louis XI sometime between 1467 and 1469, and Blumenshine has suggested that it may have been politically motivated.[9] He argues that because Louis had no male heirs when the window was commissioned, only his daughter Anne, the Tree of Jesse was used as a means of validating his royal line, and therefore it can be interpreted as a symbol of sovereignty, divine right and dynasty.[10] Whatever motivated it, this window was extremely important, inspiring a large number of other Jesse windows of similar design in the region. Why the Évreux composition was so influential can only be surmised, although the cathedral did hold relics of the sisters of the Virgin, Mary Cleophas and Mary Salome, which were given to the bishop, Guillaume de Floques, by Duke Rene I of Anjou in 1449.[11] As was the case in other parts of northern Europe, the cult of Saint Anne was extremely popular in Normandy in the second half of the fifteenth century, and it seems reasonable to assume that the cathedral would have attracted many visitors, who would have admired the window in the axial chapel.

The design of the Évreux window marked a departure from the traditional representation of the subject in French stained glass. Tree of Jesse windows in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries had tended to follow the Saint Denis or Chartres formulae (Figure 0.7).[12] In this earlier type of representation, a tree or

vine, which originates from the reclining or semi-reclining figure of Jesse, grows upwards in a single column with symmetrically dividing branches. Male figures with crowns sit at the juncture of these branches, completely or largely encircled by them. The central figures are accompanied by prophet figures on either side, with each group often enclosed in an elliptical framing. The two uppermost figures represent the Virgin and adult Christ; the Virgin is often depicted crowned and Christ is usually accompanied by one or more doves, representing the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. The purpose of these windows is clearly to illustrate the messianic nature of the prophecy of Isaiah, with the Virgin given no greater importance than any of the other ancestors of Christ. In the Évreux window however we see a shift in emphasis. The Virgin with the Christ Child in her arms now occupies the central axis; she is standing on a crescent moon, a traditional symbol of her virginity and chastity, and is in the process of being crowned by angels. Half figures of twelve kings in the blossoms of flowers are moved to the sides of the window, and Jesse and two standing prophets fill the lower part. Furthermore, Jesse is no longer depicted reclining, but is shown sitting on a gothic chair underneath a canopy, his head resting on his hand.[13]

The location of the Évreux window, in the centre of the axial chapel dedicated to the *Mère de Dieu*, with windows either side depicting, respectively, scenes from the legend of Saint Anne and Life of the Virgin, and Infancy of Christ and Death and Coronation of the Virgin, leaves little doubt that the primary function of this window

Figure 6.1 Tree of Jesse Window, c.1467–69, Notre-Dame Cathedral, Évreux

(Photo: Painton Cowen. www.therosewindow.com)

was to glorify the Virgin, emphasising her Davidic and royal descent and

highlighting her role as the mother of Christ and Queen of Heaven.[14] Although the greater importance given to the Virgin in this window can be seen to be in accordance with the more Marian nature of Tree of Jesse iconography already observed in Germany and the Netherlands, Lepape has suggested that the model for this new form of representation was particularly Flemish in origin.[15] It seems, however, that this analysis may be overly specific, as this design was already widely established throughout the Netherlands and the lower Rhine area, and could have reached Normandy via a number of different sources.

Lepape has based her argument on four pieces of evidence.[16] The first is a painted triptych in a private collection in Arras, dated by Marc Gil to 1445–50 and attributed to an Artois workshop.[17] However, most of the triptych is now lost, and although the remaining fragments do feature part of a seated figure and kings in a tree, they are not depicted in the corollas of flowers and nothing remains of the Virgin. The second example cited is a painted altarpiece above the altar of Saint Anne, in the church of Notre-Dame de Semur-en-Auxois (Saône-et-Loire). This altarpiece has been given the date 1454 and Lepape has suggested, on stylistic grounds alone, that it was executed by a Flemish artist. However, the panel was largely repainted in 1554 and, consequently, any attribution must be uncertain. Furthermore, although the altarpiece does feature many elements of the new composition, the kings are not represented as half figures in the corollas of flowers. The third example given by Lepape is the representation of a seated Jesse in a painted panel attributed to Vranke van der Stock, currently in the private palace of Philip II, part of the Escorial monastery in Madrid.[18] The main subject of this panel is the Presentation of the Virgin, and Jesse appears alone in a roundel in the decorative tracery that frames the principal scene. Lepape has suggested a date of 1450 for this panel, although there is no evidence for this dating and it is more likely to be later.[19] Furthermore, a precedent for a seated Jesse depicted as part of architectural decoration can be found on the entrance porch of the Münster in Freiburg im Breisgau. As this dates from 1300, it is clear that this form of representation was not a new invention.

The final and strongest piece of evidence offered by Lepape appears in an edition of the Postilles of Nicolas de Lyre, now in the Apostolic Library of the Vatican (Ms.Urb Lat.13, fol.5). A note on folio one dates the manuscript to 1459, and the catalogue describes it as a work of the Flemish school.[20] The Tree of Jesse miniature is very similar in composition to that of the Évreux window. Jesse sits asleep underneath a canopy on a gothic chair with three standing prophets on either side. Twelve kings are arranged in the branches of the tree, with the majority represented in the blossoms of flowers. At the top of the composition, the Virgin and Child appear in a mandorla, sitting on a crescent

moon. Nevertheless, even if the attribution is correct, this still does not prove an exclusively Flemish source for the Évreux representation, as contemporaneous examples can also be found elsewhere.

In the Hessisches Landesmuseum in Darmstadt, for example, there is a similar Tree of Jesse composition on the inner left wing of an altarpiece that has been attributed to a master active in the Lower Rhine and Cologne area and dated 1455–60.[21] Even more compelling is the existence of a large Latin manuscript containing the *Catholicon*, by Johannes Balbus of Janua, actually inscribed with the date '25 January 1457' (Royal Library of Belgium in Brussels, MS.102–03) (Figure 6.2).[22]

Figure 6.2 The *Catholicon* by Johannes Balbus of Janua, Utrecht (?), Inscribed '25 January 1457'

(Size: 50 × 35.5 cm) Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, Ms. 102–03, fol.57

This manuscript, a religious encyclopaedia, was probably written and decorated in Utrecht at the Carthusian monastery, and features, on fol.57, an illustration of Jesse seated under a tent-shaped canopy surrounded by two

standing prophets. Half figures in flower blossoms, on the branches of the tree, extend upwards to decorate the margins and, crowning the tree, is the Virgin, who is standing on a crescent moon with the Christ Child in her arms, surrounded by a mandorla.[23]

It may also be significant that the Évreux composition bears a striking resemblance to the woodcut featured in the early blockbook editions of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, discussed in Chapter One (Figure 1.3). Originating in the Low Countries, these blockbooks first appeared in 1468, at almost exactly the same time that the window in Évreux was being executed for the axial chapel. It seems apparent, therefore, that whatever the source or model for the iconography employed at Évreux, it was unlikely to be exclusively Flemish in origin, evolving in the wider area of the Low Countries and reaching Normandy via prints, codices and the many Netherlandish and German artists working there. Nevertheless, following its introduction at Évreux, this new form of representation inspired many other windows throughout the region, with several fine examples found in Rouen, in the churches of Saint Ouen (c.1467–83), Saint Maclou (1470) and Saint Vincent (c.1490).[24] In Saint Ouen the Tree of Jesse takes an unusual form and, instead of the typical lancet arrangement, the iconography appears in a rose format.[25]

Lying on the processional route for ceremonial entries into Rouen, Saint Maclou was one of the most important parish churches in Normandy.[26] Its Jesse window, high in the northern arm of the transept, although slightly different in its configuration, clearly has much in common with the window at Évreux (Figure 6.3). An unusual detail, however, is that the Christ Child holds a spinning toy in his hand. These toys, also known as *moulinet a noix*, were popular and can often be found in northern European painting. Consequently, it has been suggested that this window may have been specifically painted by a foreign artist.[27] The same iconographic detail can be found again in the Tree of Jesse window taken from the demolished church of Saint Vincent, the remains of which are now in the local museum.[28]

Illustrations in manuscripts and printed books were often a source of inspiration, and it has been suggested by both Mâle and Jean Lafond that glass-painters could have drawn on the work of Rouen miniature painters.[29] For example, a Book of Hours (c.1480), use of Rouen, in the Bodleian Library, which has been attributed to Jacob ten Eyken, has a representation of the Tree of Jesse that has much in common with both Netherlandish models and several of the Normandy windows (Ms. Douce 253, fol.18r) (Figure 6.4).[30] However, as the dating of these manuscripts is often uncertain, it is difficult to know whether the windows or manuscripts came first. It could be argued that in some instances the windows may have actually acted as models for the miniaturist. Moreover, many of the Rouen miniature painters may themselves

have been of foreign birth. Consequently, to suggest that Rouen glass-painters drew on the work of Rouen miniaturists seems rather narrow, it is far more likely that glass-painters and miniaturists alike, many of whom were not native to Rouen, would have used their own sources of reference, influencing each other.

A further example of how foreign artists may have inspired local glass-painters can be found in the work of Arnold of Nijmegen, who arrived in Rouen in the early sixteenth century. Arnold of Nijmegen (c.1470–c.1536), also known as Arnouldt de

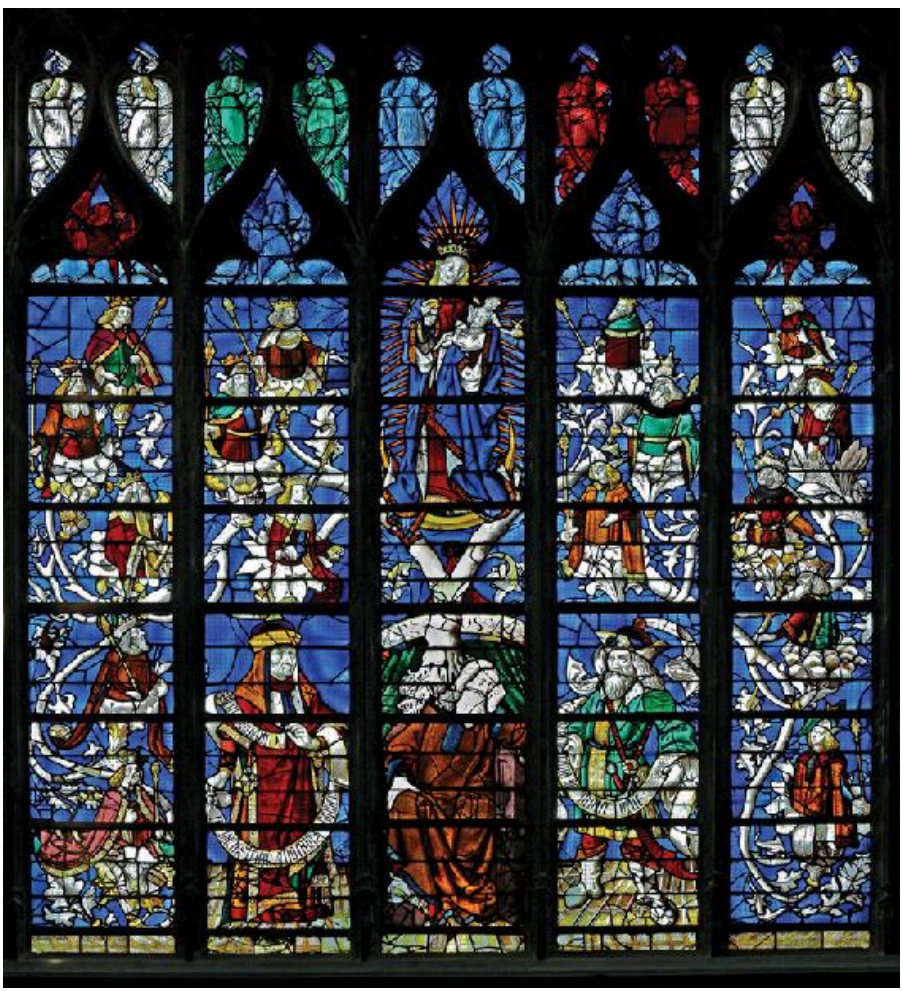


Figure 6.3 Detail of Window With Tree of Jesse, 1470, Church of Saint Maclou, Rouen

(Photo: Painton Cowen. www.therosewindow.com)

Nimègues, Arnoult de la Pointe, Arnoult de Nimègue or Aert Ortken van Nijmegen, amongst other variations of the name, was one of the most

productive and influential glass-painters of the early sixteenth century.[31] Born in the east of the Netherlands, near Germany, he was described by Elizabeth Von Witzleben in 1968 as 'one of the chief exponents of a great wave of Flemish influence'.[32] Nijmegen began his career in Tournai, where he collaborated on the windows of Tournai Cathedral between 1490 and 1500. Shortly after 1500 he moved to Rouen, where he undertook a number of well known commissions for Antoine Bohier, the Abbot of Saint Ouen in Rouen and

Figure 6.4 Book of Hours, Use of Rouen, Attributed to Jacob ten Eyken, c.1480

(Size: 18 × 12.7 cm) Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Ms. Douce 253, fol.18r

Fecamp, as well as commissions for some of the most important families of Normandy.[33] The Jesse window, in the bay of the southern lateral nave of Saint Godard (1506), is a significant example of Nijmegen's work, and also introduced a new variant in stained glass representations of the Tree of Jesse,

which was then copied for other windows elsewhere (Figure 6.5).

At the centre of the lower part of the window, Jesse sits enthroned with two prophets on either side; the collar of one of the prophets is signed '*Arnoult de la Poin'*. The framing Corinthian pilasters are adorned with delicate Renaissance decoration, and kings stand or sit above, among the branches of the tree, dressed in rich contemporary costumes. The central panes of the top two rows depict the Virgin, and although she is no longer given particular prominence by virtue of her size, she is shown standing on a crescent moon with the Christ Child in her arms. Her placement, directly above the figure of King David, underlines her Davidic descent which, in turn, necessitates the inclusion of a thirteenth king to ensure the symmetry of the window.[34] Unfortunately, the painting of the faces has faded over the years, which Lafond has attributed to Nijmegen's experimentation with a red chalk in the flesh coloured enamel, which did not fuse effectively with the glass on firing.[35] Although nothing is known of Nijmegen's workshop, stylistic similarities in later windows suggest that he must have had apprentices, who then continued in his manner after his departure some time before 1513.[36] Windows deriving from the Saint Godard model can be found at Saint Étienne in Elbeuf, c.1523 and in Caudebec-en-Caux, c.1530.[37]

As was the case elsewhere, the main patrons of Normandy stained glass windows seem to have been clerics, parish or chapter institutions, guilds, confraternities or rich individuals.[38] Although much of the evidence regarding the donors of the Jesse windows is now lost, there is still some information relating to the original commission of nine of the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century windows. Of these, eight appear to have been commissioned by individuals and one by a confraternity. This window, donated by the Confrérie de L'Angevine in 1511, is in Notre-Dame in Alençon and combines the Tree of Jesse with the Birth of the Virgin; it is therefore assumed that the confraternity must have had a special devotion to the Nativity of the Virgin.[39] Of the windows donated by individuals, the window of Notre-Dame de la Couture in Bernay (1480) carries an inscription stating that it was given by Jean Fourmage, 'in his lifetime secretary to Charles [VII] and his wife Alexise [Liée]', which perhaps indicates that it was given in commemoration.[40] The window in Saint Quentin in Allouville (c.1540) carries the coat of arms of the Récusson family, the lords of Allouville; the window in Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption in Arques-la-Bataille (1530) carries coats of arms and an inscription stating that it was given by Robert Rassent and his wife, Marguerite Charles; the window in Saint Godard, described above, carries an inscription beneath Jesse's feet that tells us that the window was given by Robert de la Mare and his children, and the window in Saint Étienne in Elbeuf (1523) carries an inscription stating that it was offered by Pierre Grisel and his

wife Marion, who are represented kneeling at the bottom of the glass with their four children. Although greatly restored, the windows in Notre-Dame in Caudebec-en-Caux (1530) and Saint Jean-Baptiste in Elbeuf (c.1500) also feature kneeling donors, although inscriptions relating to their identities have been lost. Finally, documentary evidence suggests that a lost Jesse window (1527), once in the chapel of Saint Nicolas in the church of Saint Ouen in Offranville, was given by the Duchess of Estouteville.[41]

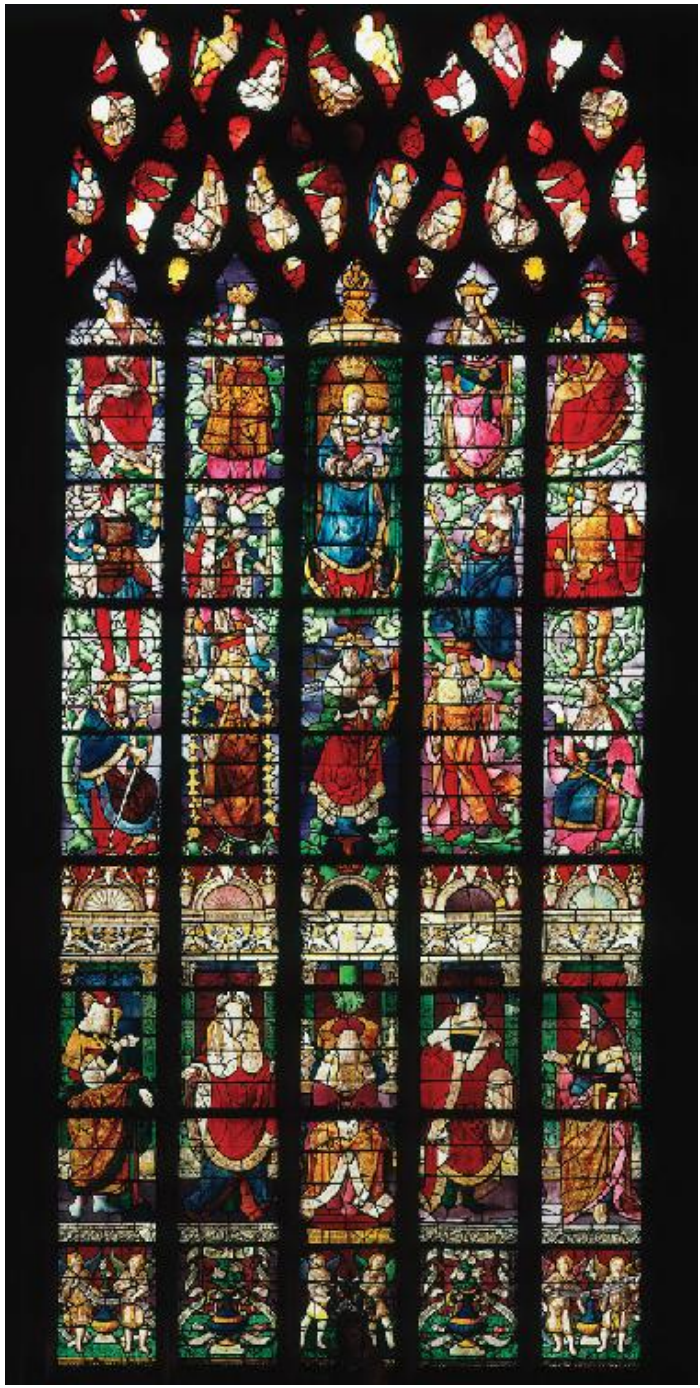


Figure 6.5 Tree of Jesse Window, Attributed to Arnold of Nijmegen, 1506, Church of Saint Godard, Rouen

(Photo: akg-images/Maurice Babey)

As previously discussed, the use of Tree of Jesse iconography to establish an analogy between divine and temporal royalty has a long history, and the motif can be seen to have been adopted by other elite social groups to reflect their own dynastic aspirations. The fact that so many of the Jesse windows in Normandy churches are known to have been commissioned by those of noble birth, and other rich individuals, may suggest that there was also a more temporal element to these donations. The primary concern of individuals at this time was to define their place in a strictly hierarchic society, and northern European printed images show many new subjects, such as coats of arms, which were designed for the new upwardly mobile bourgeoisie.[42] The presence of kneeling donors, inscriptions and coats of arms, in conjunction with a representation of holy genealogy, would have not only reminded the clergy to pray for their benefactors, but would have acted as a confirmation of the donors' distinguished lineage, or alternatively lent legitimacy to those with newly acquired status. Following the use of the iconography in the Évreux window, which was given by Louis XI, it is possible that the donors of these subsequent windows were intentionally imitating what they perceived of as a kingly and aristocratic tradition, displaying their elevated social position to the wider parish community.

Previous scholarship has assumed that the large number of Jesse windows in Normandy in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries can be associated with a special regard for the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin although, on examination, this may be rather tenuous.[43] There is no denying that devotion to the concept was very popular in Normandy, going back to 1266, when the archbishop of Rouen, Eudes Rigaud, introduced *la fête aux Normands* on the 8th December to celebrate the Immaculate Conception. In addition, many confraternities were established under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception and actively encouraged devotion to the belief.[44] In 1486, one of these confraternities became preeminent. Although it was originally established in the church of Saint Jean-Sur-Renelle, it relocated in 1515 to the Carmelite monastery in the centre of Rouen.[45] This confraternity set up a competition, known as *Le Puy de Rouen* or *Le Puy des Palinods*, dedicated to the poetic glorification of the Immaculate Conception, and the winner was named a prince of the Puy.[46] However, despite the popularity of this competition, no palinod text has been successfully related to the iconography of any particular window, and there is no evidence that any confraternities of the Immaculate Conception commissioned any of the Jesse windows. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter Two, it seems that other subjects were available that may have had more of an immaculist subtext than the Tree of Jesse. For instance, Jean Lafond, among others, has particularly associated windows that depict the Virgin surrounded by emblems of the

litanies with belief in the Immaculate Conception.[47] These windows became popular during the early part of the sixteenth century and were commissioned for the churches of Saint Jean-Baptist in Elbeuf, Saint Vincent in Rouen, Les Grandes-Ventes, Saint Mards and Tillièressur-Avre, to name but a few.[48] While it is the case that Jesse windows can also be found in many of these churches, it does not necessarily mean that the iconography was also being used to illustrate the concept. Moreover, it would be unusual for a parish church to have had a cohesive iconographic glazing programme at this time, as each window's subject matter would mostly likely be determined by the individual choices of the donor. It seems, therefore, that the Normandy Jesse windows were not generally intended by their donors as a direct expression of support for the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.

Despite the fact that it was unusual for parish churches to have cohesive glazing programmes at this time, thirteen windows, executed between 1520 and 1530 for the choir of the church of Saint Vincent in Rouen, have been seen to be imbued with the palinodic spirit. Although this programme does not include a Tree of Jesse, it does include a Tree of Saint Anne, which has much in common with Netherlandish representations of the subject. Although Saint Vincent was destroyed by bombing in May 1944, the windows survived and have subsequently been remounted in Sainte Jeanne d'Arc.[49] Saint Anne was a popular subject in Normandy stained glass, and in the Saint Vincent window she is shown seated at the centre of the lower register, with branches of the tree growing from the area directly above her head (Figure 6.6).[50] Standing beside her is the young Virgin, whom she is teaching to read, and on either side stand Maria Salome and Maria Cleophas. Their sons, identified by their attributes, are arranged in the branches of the tree above them.[51] Directly above Saint Anne is another representation of the Virgin, now as an adult with the Christ Child in her arms and, above her, is the adult Christ, who is dressed in a violet tunic and is holding his Cross. The tympanum contains a celestial concert, whilst, at the bottom of the window, the unknown donors are represented with their family, either side of a depiction of Joachim and Saint Anne meeting at the Golden Gate. When we compare this window with Netherlandish models discussed in Chapter Two, such as the print by Master W with Key and the painted panel by Gerard David (Figures 2.3 and 2.4), many similarities are apparent, perhaps suggesting the use of a pre-existing model.

Two workshops were responsible for the execution of the Saint Vincent windows. Three carry the initials of the famous glass-painter Engrand le Prince, and it would seem that they were produced in Beauvais (Picardy) by the le Prince workshop. The remaining windows, although by different hands, have been attributed on stylistic grounds to the same Rouen workshop.[52]

Although the individual glass-painters are unknown, Lafond, and more recently Véronique Chaussé and Laurence de Finance, believe that Nijmegen's influence can clearly be seen in these windows, particularly in those of the ambulatory and the chapel of Saint Anne and, most especially, in the Tree of Saint Anne.[53] Lafond has therefore suggested that these windows can be attributed to two or three masters from the workshop Nijmegen founded in Rouen around 1500.[54] If this was the case, then the glass-painters could have been working from a model imported by Nijmegen. Similar Tree of Saint Anne windows can also be found in Saint Eloi in Rouen and Notre-Dame de l'Assomption, Houppeville, and may have been directly inspired by the Saint Vincent window. A further window also exists at Saint-Ouen Longpaon, in Darnétal, and other windows at Pont l'Eveque and at Saint Nicaise, in Rouen, were described by Lafond before being destroyed by bombing in 1939.[55]

In summary, given how much stained glass must have been lost during the French Wars of Religion and in the following centuries, the fact that so many late fifteenth and early sixteenth century Tree of Jesse windows remain in Normandy parish churches is clearly significant. This new wave of Jesse windows broke with the traditional representation of the subject in French stained glass, placing a greater emphasis on the figure of the Virgin. Although this new form of representation has been thought to have derived from a uniquely Flemish model, it seems more likely that whilst it almost certainly had its origins in the Low Countries, no one specific area or source can be identified. The circulation of foreign codices and prints, and the presence of artists from both the Netherlands and the Rhineland, appear to have influenced both local

Figure 6.6 Tree of Saint Anne Window, c.1520–30, Church of Sainte Jeanne d'Arc, Rouen (Photo: Painton Cowen. www.therosewindow.com)

glass-painters and donors alike. This is most apparent in the windows

associated with Nijmegen and his workshop. The identification of the *moulinet a noix* detail in the Saint Vincent and Saint Maclou windows may also be evidence of the work of a Netherlandish glass-painter.

Use of the Tree of Jesse motif in the region has been linked with a special devotion to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, although on examination this seems overly reductive. Not only were other forms of iconography available that were far more explicit, but also the Tree of Jesse windows seem to be particularly concerned with establishing the Virgin's Davidic descent, perhaps linking ideas of divine and earthly lineage. As in the Netherlands and Germany, the matrilineal genealogy of Christ was obviously of interest to Normandy patrons, and the Tree of Saint Anne window from the former church of Saint Vincent owes much to Netherlandish models, inspiring other windows in the area. While the Tree of Saint Anne appears to have been relatively popular in Normandy, there is no evidence that it was ever represented in stained glass in Champagne or Brittany. Renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography in both these regions manifested itself in a slightly different way.

The Champagne Region

Although the trend for Tree of Jesse windows in the Champagne region post-dates that of Normandy, it seems that in terms of their representation of the subject, the Champagne windows were not directly influenced by them. The late fifteenth and early sixteenth century windows in Normandy often followed the Évreux model, while the Champagne windows appear to be less formulaic, with varying numbers of kings and prophets sometimes, but not always, included. Jesse is usually depicted in a semi-reclining position, mostly leaning on his left hand, but occasionally on his right. In addition, although all are crowned by the Virgin, it seems that she does not play such a major role in the Champagne windows, where she is largely restricted to a half figure in a flower blossom in the tympanum, often surrounded by a mandorla, but without a crescent moon. While the function of these windows was still to acknowledge the Virgin's Davidic descent, there is a more equal emphasis on Christ's other ancestors.

Most of the historical province of Champagne is now part of the French administrative region of Champagne-Ardenne, which comprises four departments: the Ardennes, the Aube, Haute-Marne and Marne.[56] Troyes, in the Aube, was the former capital and the home of the counts of Champagne,

who had established the Champagne fairs, linking the cloth-producing cities of the Low Countries with Italian dyeing and export centres. These fairs flourished in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and Troyes became an important commercial and artistic centre.[57] In the late thirteenth century, with the marriage of Jeanne Countess of Champagne and Navarre to the future French king, Philip IV, Champagne became an integral part of France and ceased to have its own resident court. At the same time, Philip's war with Flanders disrupted overland trade routes, and new sea routes opened up, all of which led to the decline of the fairs.[58] The Black Death and Hundred Years' War had further devastating effects on the fortunes of the region, with both Burgundian and English troops occupying Troyes at different times.

Joan of Arc finally liberated and restored Troyes to the French crown in 1429, and trade in the region began to flourish once again.[59] As was the case in Normandy, along with peace and economic prosperity came a period of regeneration. Not only were churches extended and rebuilt, but many new churches were also erected, and all required glass for their windows.[60] Large forests in Argonne, le Bassigny, the d'Othe plateau and in the region of Der meant that there were several glass-works in the area which were able to meet the renewed demand, and two major artistic centres emerged: Reims to the north and Troyes in the south. Despite heavy bombing during the First World War and further destruction during the Second, the department of the Aube in particular remains one of the richest areas for stained glass in France, the majority of which dates back to the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[61]

The primary subject matter of these windows is essentially traditional, illustrating events from the Life of the Virgin or that of Christ. There is also a large amount of hagiographic glass, often depicting several successive scenes from the story of a saint's martyrdom. A large proportion of the remaining glass features Tree of Jesse iconography. Of the one hundred and eighty-five churches documented in the Corpus Vitrearum study of the Aube, approximately a quarter either still retain a Tree of Jesse window or have fragments that indicate that such a window was once in situ.[62] Unfortunately, the other departments of the region retain less of their stained glass. In the Ardennes only four churches are catalogued; although one is known to have had a Tree of Jesse window, this is now lost. In Marne and Haute-Marne, sixty-two religious buildings are recorded; of these, eight have a Jesse window dating from the first half of the sixteenth century, with evidence that other Jesse windows once also existed.

Although the majority of Champagne Tree of Jesse windows appear in parish churches, as in Normandy, the first of the new wave of windows was executed for a cathedral. This window, on the south side of the nave in the

cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul in Troyes, is attributed to the glass-painter Lyénin Varin, who, according to the municipal archives, was established in Troyes from 1486 (Figure 6.7).[63] Unlike the 'Normandy formula', the Troyes window features twenty-seven descendants of Jesse and, unusually, the tree is crowned not by the Virgin, but by Christ, who is depicted alone in the flower blossom with His parents represented to either side. There was already a Tree of Jesse window in the axial chapel of the cathedral, dating from the thirteenth century, its iconography following the twelfth century formula seen at Chartres, with Kings David and Solomon, the Virgin and Christ, represented in ascending order along the central axis.[64] This begs the question of why the donor wanted to donate a second Jesse window to the cathedral, which, according to an inscription running along the base of the glass, he and his wife gave in honour of Saint Peter in the year 1498. The donor is represented on the lower left of the window, with his coat of arms, alongside other adult male members of his family. His wife is represented with her coat of arms and young female members of the family on the lower right. There is some disagreement in the literature as to the identity of this donor. The Corpus Vitrearum study states that he was Jean de Marisy, which appears to be supported by a close examination of the inscription.[65] However, it may be possible that this name was corrupted during restoration, as earlier authors have identified him as François de Marisy.[66] Jean de Marisy was rewarded for his loyalty to Louis XI in 1471, when he was made the first mayor of Troyes, and he was appointed again in 1488.[67] François de Marisy was the Lord of Cervet and fourth mayor of Troyes, the first to be appointed under Louis XII in 1498.[68] It seems, therefore, that either of the Marisy men could have commissioned the window, perhaps to mark the family's return to power. As previously stated, donors were responsible for the subject matter of their individual windows, and the choice of Tree of Jesse iconography could be

Figure 6.7 Tree of Jesse Window, Attributed to Lyénin Varin, c.1498–99, Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, Troyes

(Photo: Painton Cowen. www.therosewindow.com)

considered particularly appropriate.[69] By creating an analogy with the royal ancestors of Christ, the Marisy family were making a major statement about their own noble lineage and standing.

Of the other Jesse windows in the Champagne region, visual evidence still exists for the original donation of eight, usually in the form of an inscription and/or coats of arms, with kneeling donors sometimes appearing in the lower register. In all cases, the donors are individuals, rather than guilds, confraternities or other religious groups. One window, in Herbisse, was given by the priests of the parish, Jacque Prénel and Barbe Laurendel, in 1512, and the window at Les-Noës-Près-Troyes was given by the church wardens, Jehan and Nicolas Fourmillart, in 1521.[70] The remainder seem to have been given by wealthy local families.[71] For example, the window in Pont-Sainte-Marie was given by Nicolas Cotton and his wife in 1530; the window in Saint Remi in Ceffond was given by Jean Perrin and his wife in 1512; and that of Rigny-Le-Ferron by Robin Landry, *drapier* (a cloth manufacturer) and his wife Jeanne, sometime in the first quarter of the sixteenth century.[72] In his history of Troyes, Françoise Bibolet describes how the ancient noble families of Troyes were rare by the late fifteenth century, having been annihilated or ruined since the crusades.[73] Troyes, he claims, was run by the wealthy families of the city, some of whom were merchants or members of the civic body 'seized with a passion for the nobility'. While some were ennobled for services rendered to the crown, others purchased rural fiefdoms just to acquire the title of lord. Furthermore, it seems that this bourgeoisie showed great generosity in adorning their parish churches.[74] Consequently, as with the Jesse windows in Normandy, these donors, following royal and aristocratic precedents, may have also used Tree of Jesse iconography in order to publicise their newfound wealth and status.

The depiction of Joseph in the Jesse window given by the de Marisy family to Troyes Cathedral is not an isolated example, and the saint's presence in the tympanum of several other Champagne windows seems to be indicative of a special devotion in the region. The cult of Saint Joseph was well established in the Netherlands by the late fifteenth century, although it seems that it was still relatively unusual in France.[75] In the Champagne windows, Joseph is depicted as a youngish man, often identified by an inscription and carrying a lily, which appears to relate to the notion of the 'flowering of Joseph's rod', a story that was derived from the various books of the apocrypha. These recount how the priests at the temple, when seeking a husband for Mary, distributed rods to the candidates in expectation of a divine sign. Joseph's rod flowered and a dove descended from heaven to indicate that he was the chosen one.[76] In addition, Joseph's rod was also seen as a symbol of the Virgin's purity, as it flowered without being fertilised.

A notable early supporter of devotion to Saint Joseph was Jean de Charlier de Gerson (1363–1429). Gerson, who came from the village of Barby in the diocese of Reims, had links with the Netherlands, and was appointed Dean of

the church of Saint Donatian in Bruges from 1397 to 1401. During the early part of the fifteenth century he went to great lengths to promulgate the cult of Saint Joseph, composing an Office of the Espousals of Joseph to Mary in 1400 and in 1416 asking the Council of Constance to introduce a feast to the saint, although this was not achieved until 1479.[77] In a sermon on the Feast of the Nativity of Mary, in 1416, he presented Joseph and Mary not only in terms of their chastity, but also as representatives of a royal line.[78] In addition, his celebrated poem, 'Josephina', completed in 1418, again discusses Joseph's royal descent in conjunction with the matrilineal genealogy of the Virgin. Gerson also advocated that Joseph should not be represented as old and doddering, but as a virile and robust man in his late thirties.[79] It seems, therefore, that the iconography of these Champagne windows derives specifically from Gerson's teachings and could reflect his association with the region. Furthermore, glass-painters may have based their representations on Netherlandish models, such as the print by Master W with Key, which features Joseph at the top of a genealogical tree of Saint Anne, alongside the Virgin and Christ Child (Figure 2.3).

The greatest epoch for stained glass production in Troyes was from 1500 to 1535, and the majority of existing Jesse windows in the region fall into this time period. A particularly influential window was commissioned in 1518, from the glass-painter Jehan Macardé, the nephew of Lyénin Varin, for the church of Sainte Madeleine in Troyes (Figure 6.8).[80] Here, Jesse is depicted in a semi-reclining position, at the base of the tree, with Saint John the Evangelist and the prophet Isaiah standing to his right. Thirty-eight ancestors of Christ, identified by inscriptions, are arranged in flower blossoms on the tree, which is crowned in the tympanum by the Virgin holding the Christ Child in her arms, surrounded by a mandorla. Joseph, holding a lily, is depicted in the soufflet immediately beneath the Virgin. This window shares many similarities with earlier windows in the churches of the Assumption in Herbisse and Saint-Clair in Vaudes, both dated to c.1512. Unfortunately, it is not known if Macardé or his uncle were involved in either of these earlier windows, or whether there may have been some other connection. Nevertheless, the window in Sainte Madeleine appears to have inspired numerous other windows, both in the diocese and beyond. Variations of its design can be found at the church of Saint Loup in Auxon, the church of the Nativity of the Virgin in Bérulle, the church of Saint Germain in Saint Germain and the church of the Conception of the Virgin in Puellemontier, although this latter window underwent extensive restoration in the nineteenth century, which may have altered its appearance.

The windows of Notre-Dame of the Nativity in Les-Noës-Près-Troyes (1521), Notre-Dame of the Assumption in Pont-Sainte-Marie (1530), Saint Martin in Rigny-Le-Ferron (c.1500–25) and Saint Remi in Ceffonds (1512), all feature, at

the bottom of the window, representations of Moses and the Burning Bush and Gideon with his Fleece.[81] Both of these subjects came to be associated with the Virgin Birth, and there are early examples where they can be found depicted alongside the Tree of Jesse.[82] A contemporaneous source for the iconography of these windows may, however, derive from the association of ideas in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Chapter Seven uses illustrations of Moses and the Burning Bush and Gideon with his Fleece as prefigurations for the Annunciation, and in the text links them with Joseph and the prophecy of Isaiah. This recounts how Joseph, on discovering that Mary was pregnant, speculates on whether she might be the virgin of the flowering rod that was prophesied to spring from the root of Jesse.[83] These windows, therefore, could be a further testament to the influence of the *Speculum* manuscripts and blockbooks on late medieval iconography.

As was the case in Normandy, it seems that Books of Hours, especially those published in Paris between 1495 and 1500, and more particularly those produced by the printer Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre, may have also constituted a significant source of models for Champagne artists. Representations of the Tree of Jesse in this text can clearly be seen to have much in common with the Champagne windows, as can a similar representation in a Book of Hours printed for Gillet Hardouin in 1503 (Figure 6.9).[84]

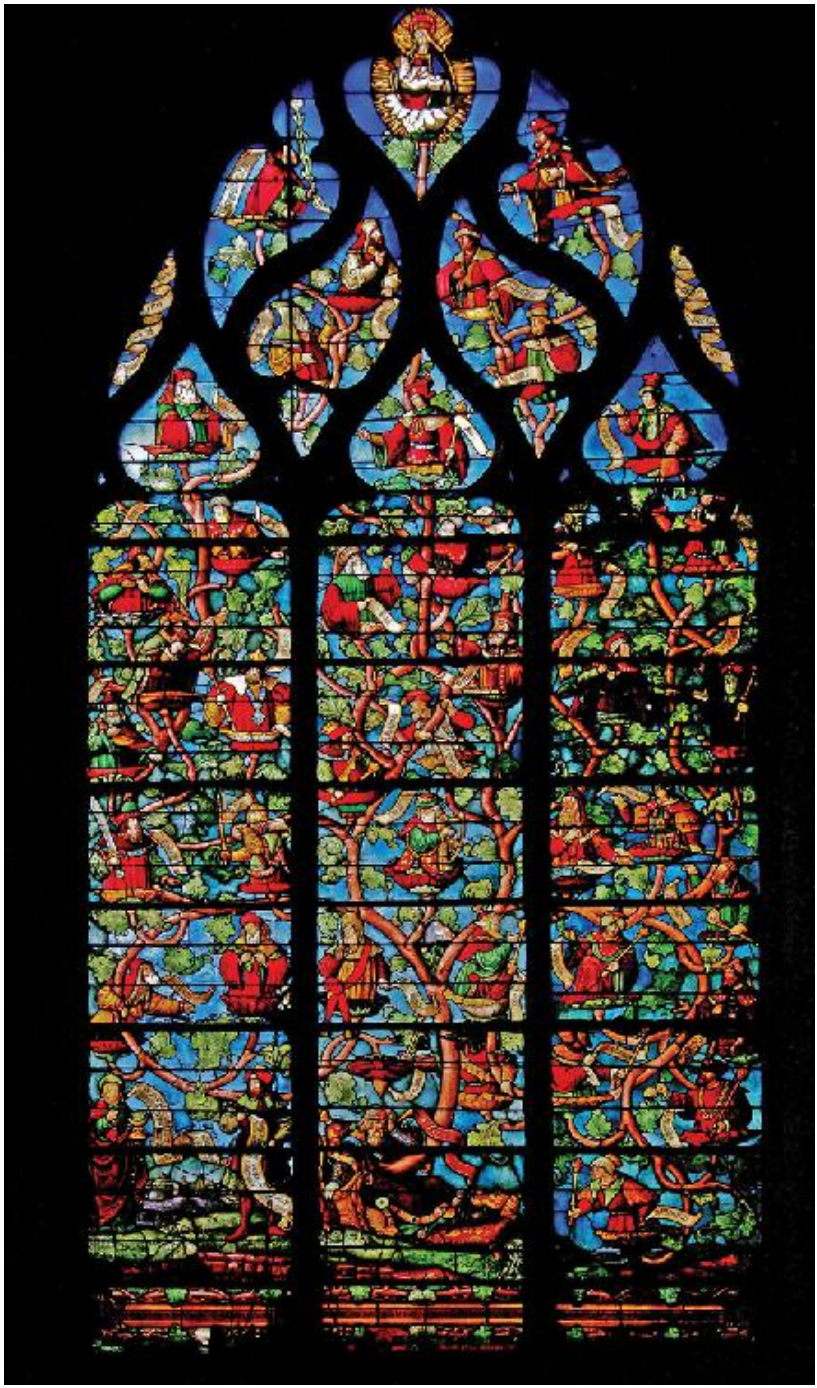


Figure 6.8 Tree of Jesse Window, Attributed to Jehan Macardé, 1518, Church of Saint Madeleine, Troyes

(Photo: Painton Cowen. www.therosewindow.com)

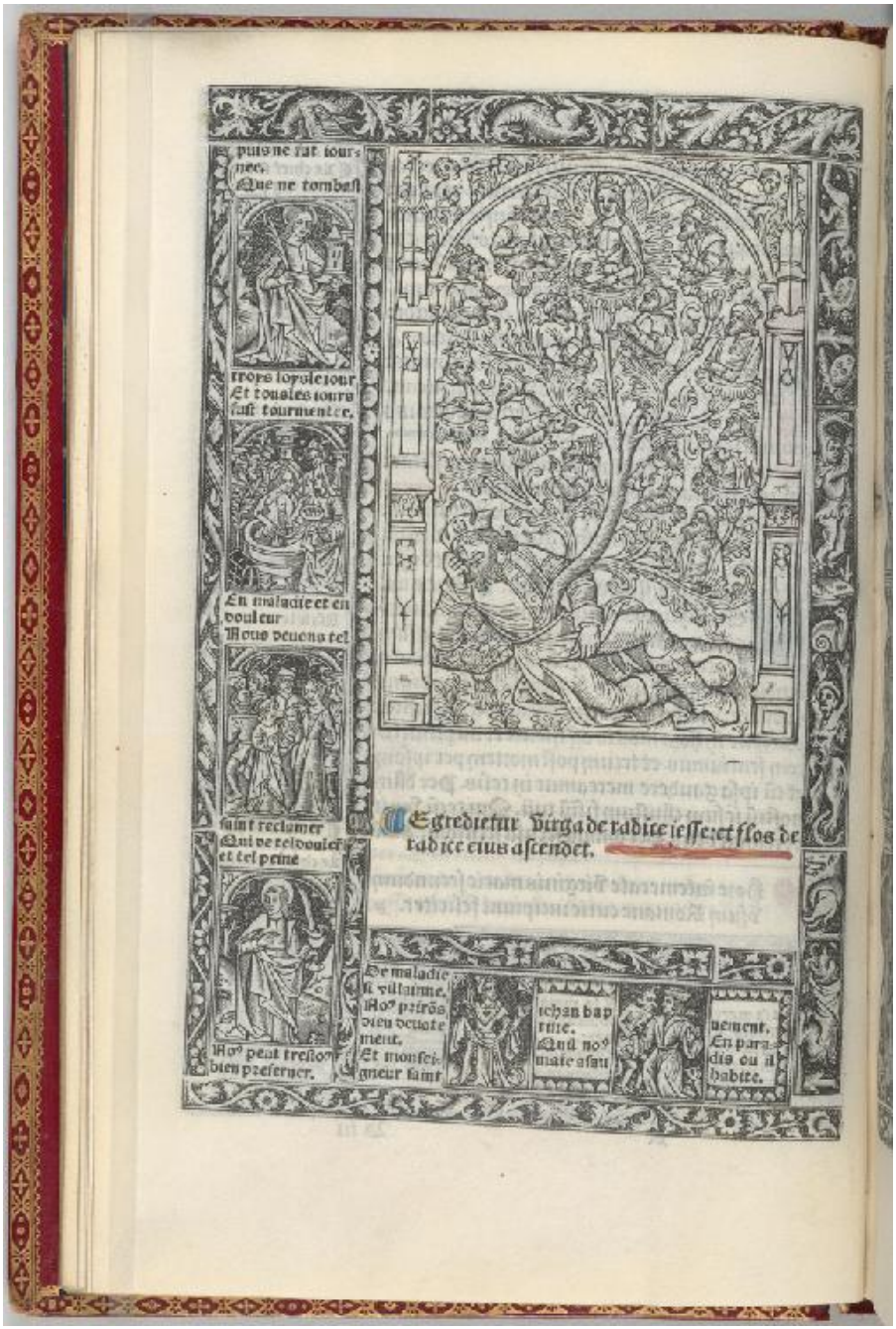


Figure 6.9 Tree of Jesse Illustration From a Gillet Hardouin Book of Hours, 1503

The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, PML 19286

Despite the large number of workshops that must have been involved in their creation, Troyenne windows of this period share many technical and

stylistic similarities, predominantly characterised by a heavy emphatic drawing and the use of intense colours and saturated tones. Following his study of sixteenth century Champagne stained glass in 1935, Paul Biver conceived the notion of a Troyenne school of glass-painters.[85] He concluded that, in view of the large number of commissions, artists must have been forced to work remarkably quickly, and he identified numerous instances where he believed the same cartoon was used again and again. These would not have been cartoons of full windows to scale, but rather of smaller areas, such as generic figures, animals or damasks. The Tree of Jesse, with its vegetal decoration and multiple figures, lends itself easily to this practise, and Biver believed that it was possible to see figures or silhouettes repeated and transformed in many different windows.[86] Even though certain windows, such as that of Sainte Madeleine, seem to have been admired by other glass-painters who may have used them as models, no cartoons remain today, and so assumptions regarding working practise must remain pure speculation.

Archival sources provide the names of the workshops of many of the glass-painters of this period, such as Jehan Soudain and Jehan Macardé, but it is difficult in the majority of cases to match a window with an individual painter.[87] Although it is not known precisely how many foreign artists were working in Troyes at this time, it seems safe to assume that, as in Normandy, Netherlandish and even German artists would have been attracted to the region in search of work. What influence they had can only be surmised, although similarities between the Champagne windows and German representations of the subject, such as the Jesse window in Cologne Cathedral of 1507–9, may be evidence of some sort of artistic exchange. Unfortunately, due to iconoclasm and losses sustained during the Napoleonic period, so little remains of pre-Reformation Netherlandish glass that it is impossible to make any reasonable comparisons with this area.[88]

Even though it appears that Tree of Saint Anne iconography was not used for stained glass in the Champagne region, there is still evidence that her cult was popular, and many windows relating to her life and legend can be found, such as those at Bérulle, Polisot and Saint Nizier in Troyes.[89] However, unlike Normandy, we know of no special interest in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, even though the existence of several windows which depict the Litanies have been interpreted as evidence of devotion.[90] The incorporation of the Litanies in the tympanum of a Jesse window at Auxon may be a reflection of that particular donor's concern with the subject, although this conflation of themes appears to be an isolated case, and there is nothing to suggest that other Jesse windows were particularly associated with the belief. Windows containing images thought to relate to the Immaculate Conception can be found at Rigny-Le-Ferron, Saint Germain and Vaudes, churches which also

contain Tree of Jesse windows. However, as discussed in relation to the Normandy windows, this does not necessarily mean that the Tree of Jesse was also seen as an expression of support for the concept. With more than two hundred windows focusing on the glorification of the Virgin in the Champagne region, it seems that her cult was extremely popular, and it is most likely that Tree of Jesse iconography here, as elsewhere, was used as a way of honouring the mother of Christ as a royal descendant of Jesse and King David; the *virga* of the prophecy of Isaiah.

It seems, therefore, that Champagne's long tradition of trade and artistic exchange with the Low Countries may have had an impact on the choice and form of a large number of Jesse windows in the region. The influence of foreign models, derived from imported prints, Books of Hours and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, can be found in many windows, and the use of cartoons may have allowed artists to execute these designs relatively quickly. As in Normandy, the subject was a popular choice for individual donors, perhaps linked to a desire to demonstrate the importance of their family connections. The inclusion of Saint Joseph in a large number of windows may also be indicative of a special devotion to the saint, who was already popular in the Netherlands. After 1535, we see a move away from the highly coloured glass of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, to grisaille on white glass with yellow and red highlights. The number of Jesse windows commissioned diminished during the course of the century, and artists came increasingly under the influence of the Italian style and the glass-painter Dominique Florentin, who had made his home in Troyes whilst working at Fontainebleau.[91] Meanwhile, it seems that in Brittany, far to the west of northern France, interest in the Tree of Jesse was just reaching its peak.

Brittany

Although they are less numerous than those of Normandy or Champagne, Brittany, which covers the departments of the Ille-et-Vilaine, Côtes-D'Armor, Morbihan and Finistère, still retains evidence of the previous existence of at least twenty-five pre-Revolution Jesse windows. Unfortunately, eleven of these are now reduced to fragments, or have subsequently been lost.[92] All the remaining windows date to the sixteenth century, predominantly to the second third, with the highest concentration in the Côte d'Amor and Morbihan regions. A number of these are similar in several respects to the Normandy windows, particularly in their representation of a seated Jesse, although several

also indicate a particular interest in the Crucifixion. In addition, the Tree of Jesse appears to have been popular for small wooden retables and sculpted groups, where a new variant can be found that features the Tree of Jesse in conjunction with a representation of the Temptation of Eve.

As we have seen in previous chapters, there is a link between pre-Reformation Tree of Jesse iconography and devotion to Saint Anne, and this may be particularly significant in Brittany, where Saint Anne was not only the patron saint of the region, but had also been actively propagated by the last independent ruler of the duchy, Anne of Brittany.[93] In 1488, Anne had succeeded her father, and although she married two French kings, she remained Duchess and sovereign of the region. On her death in 1514, the duchy passed to her daughter, Claude, who married the future king, François I. Brittany was finally incorporated into the kingdom of France in 1532.[94] Despite this unification, the 1480s to the 1560s were a period of peace and prosperity for Brittany, which, as we have seen in Normandy and Champagne, encouraged the rebuilding of churches that, in turn, required new windows.[95]

The principal centres of stained glass production in Brittany were Rennes, Tréguier and particularly Quimper, which was home to the Le Sodec workshop. In 1520 Olivier and Laurent Sodec were responsible for the Jesse window in the church of the Holy Trinity of Kerfeunteun in Quimper (Finistère), which appears to have inspired others in the region (Figure 6.10).[96] Jesse sits in the lower register of the window

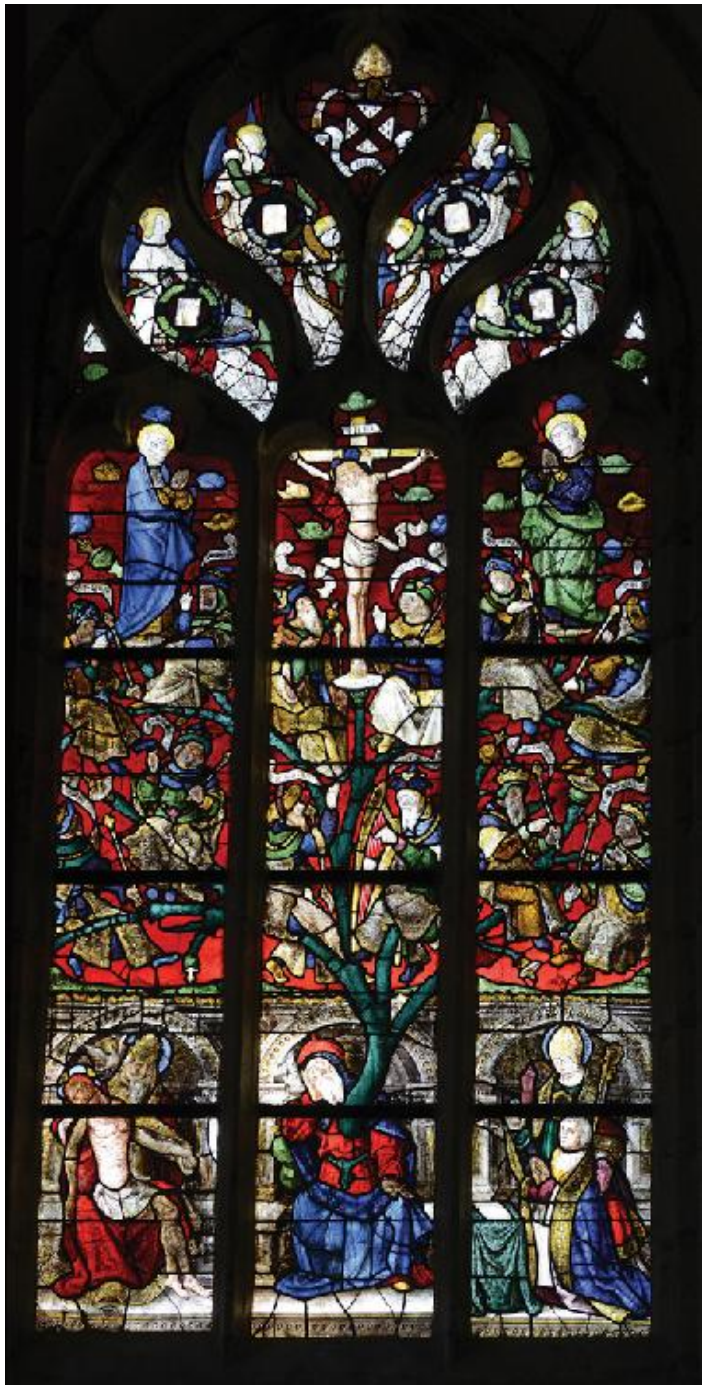


Figure 6.10 Tree of Jesse Window, Attributed to Oliver and Laurent Sodec, 1520, Holy Trinity Church, Kerfeunteun, Quimper

(Photo: © Cliché Serge Goarin/Musée départemental breton, Quimper)

and the tree rises up to support twelve kings arranged on its branches. At the summit of the tree is a depiction of Christ on the Cross, between the Virgin and John the Evangelist.[97] A representation of God the Father holding the crucified Christ in his arms, with the dove of the Holy Spirit hovering to one side, appears on the right side of Jesse; the kneeling donor, believed to be the bishop of Quimper, Claude de Rohan, is shown with a bishop saint to Jesse's left. The unusual iconography of this window clearly reflects the dedication of the church to the Holy Trinity; however, the use of the Tree of Jesse also serves to underline the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy, a typological vision and reaffirmation of the link between the Incarnation and Salvation.

An early visual precedent for French representations of the Tree of Jesse combined with the Crucifixion can be found in a fourteenth-century manuscript from Picardy, the *Brunetto Latini Le Livre du Trésor*.[98] In addition, as we have seen, there are numerous examples where the Crucifixion was combined with the Tree of Jesse in Antwerp altarpieces, and it is possible that these could have provided a contemporary model for the Breton glass-painters. Antwerp altar-pieces seem to have been exported all over Europe, and the current location of three Tree of Jesse/Passion altarpieces, in the Abbey Saint-Pierre in Baume-les-Messieurs in the Jura, Sainte-Marie-Madeleine de Maignelay in Picardy and in the church of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois in Paris, may suggest that there were similar altarpieces in situ in Brittany in the sixteenth century. The combination of themes in the Brittany windows, however, goes one stage further. Rather than just framing the Crucifixion, the Tree of Jesse actually supports the Tree of the Cross, implying an even closer relationship between the Tree of Jesse, the Tree of Life and the wood from which the Cross was made. The motif is therefore visually imbued with a Eucharistic dimension.[99] The location of the Kerfeunteun window, in the central bay of the axial chapel, acts as a highly appropriate backdrop to the Mass, creating a vertical progression that links the host as it is elevated by the priest, the Cross on the altar and the Crucifixion at the top of the window.

Whatever its source, the iconography of the window at Kerfeunteun was clearly influential, and a similar window can be found in the centre of the axial chapel at Notre-Dame de Confort in Meilars (Finistère), donated by Alain de Rosmadec and Jeanne du Chastel in c.1530.[100] Another window, thought to be associated with the families of de Boutteville and du Chastel, in the chapel of Saint Fiacre in Faouët (Morbihan), also features the Tree of Jesse and the Crucifixion.[101] The conflation of the Crucifixion with Tree of Jesse iconography also found its way into monumental sculpture. Stone representations of Calvary were popular in Brittany, and the Calvary at Guéhenno (Morbihan), erected in 1550, has a figure wrapped around the lower part of the cross that has been identified as Jesse.[102]

Three Tree of Jesse windows attributed to the Rennes glass-painter Michel Bayonne seem to fuse various elements of both the Normandy and Champagne windows. The first of these, for the church of Saint Peter in Beignon (Morbihan), was probably donated by François Bohier, bishop of Saint Malo in c.1540–50, and features a seated Jesse under a tent-shaped canopy, with a prophet on either side (Figure 6.11).[103] David is placed directly above Jesse on the main trunk of the tree, with the other eleven kings arranged on the branches. Crowning the tree in the tympanum is the Virgin, who holds the Christ Child in her arms and is surrounded by a mandorla.

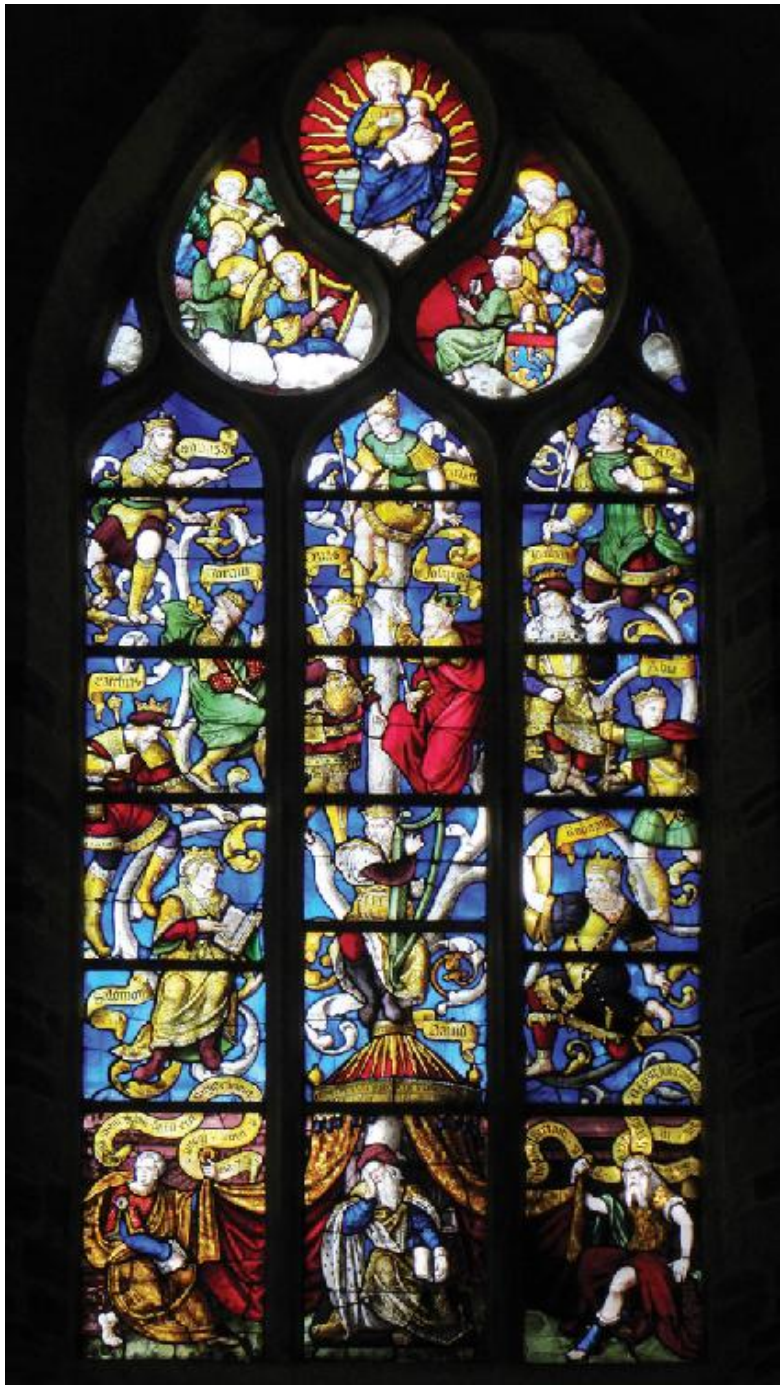


Figure 6.11 Tree of Jesse Window, Attributed to Michel Bayonne, c.1540–50, Church of Saint Peter, Beignon

(Photo: GO69, Wikimedia Commons. CC BY-SA 3.0)

The other windows, at the churches of Saint Martin in Moulins (Ille-et-Vilaine), c.1560 and Notre-Dame in La Ferrière (Côtes-D'Armor), 1551, are almost identical, although the Virgin in these windows is represented in the blossom of a flower.[104] Unlike the Crucifixion windows described above, the Tree of Jesse in these windows has a predominantly Marian function, highlighting the role played by the Virgin in the Incarnation. The window in Saint Peter's in Beignon clearly inspired other donors and glass-painters in the Morbihan, and relatively similar representations of the subject can be found at Notre-Dame de Bon-Garant in Férel, thought to have been donated by the Rieux family in c.1545, the chapel of Notre-Dame de Locmaria in Melrand, c.1540–50, and the church of Saint Mériadec de Stival in Pontivy, c.1550.[105] In Pontivy and Melrand, the windows are still in the axial chapel, whilst in Férel the window was moved from the axial chapel to the nave when the church was rebuilt.

In the chapel of Notre-Dame de Quelven in Guern, the mid-sixteenth-century Jesse window, originally in the choir but now in the nave, is even closer to Normandy representations, as it also features the Virgin standing on a crescent moon. Hardly a chapel, this vast church is one of the most important pilgrimage churches in Brittany. A particular form of Breton pilgrimage, unique to the western part of Brittany, is known as a Pardon. These Pardons, which are numerous, occur on the feast day of the patron saint of a church or chapel at which an indulgence is granted.[106] The Quelven Pardon, which takes place on the feast of the Assumption, is dedicated to the Virgin, and the Jesse window, which may have been donated by the Rimaison family, celebrates her majesty as Queen of Heaven. A similar window of c.1530–40 can be found in the church of Notre-Dame and Saint Mathurin, Moncontour (Côtes-D'Armor).[107]

As in Normandy and the Champagne region, most of the stained glass in Brittany has undergone an element of restoration, and often information relating to the original donors of the windows has been lost or may be unreliable. Nevertheless, it does seem from the evidence available that Tree of Jesse windows here, as elsewhere, were predominantly commissioned by wealthy individuals in the region, both clerical and lay, rather than by religious institutions, guilds or confraternities. Consequently, it may also be the case that these windows had a commemorative or dynastic secondary function.

Polychromed small wooden altarpieces or carved groups that feature Tree of Jesse iconography in conjunction with a standing figure of the Virgin holding the Christ Child, also appear to have been popular in Brittany throughout the sixteenth century.[108] Examples can be found on the altar in the chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Berven, Plouzévédé (Finistère) or in the church of Notre-Dame-de-Confort, Berhet (Côtesd'Armor). The function of the altarpieces is

fairly obvious, yet the purpose of the small sculpted groups is less clear, and they were probably placed on pedestals or in niches in the church, much as they are displayed today. Many of these works also incorporate a particularly Breton variant of the iconography. In these images, Jesse can be seen to be partially entwined with a demonic half human, half reptilian figure, who is offering up an apple, as in the polychromed wooden sculpture of c.1500–25 in the church of Notre-Dame, Trédrez (Côtes-d'Armor) (Figure 6.12). It seems that carved representations of the Virgin with this type of demonic figure of temptation were relatively commonplace in the western part of Brittany. Debidour has described them as a way of depicting the Virgin as the New Eve, who crushes the serpent beneath her feet to show her triumph over evil.[109] In 2005, Hiroko Amemiya identified fifty-five wooden ensembles of the Virgin and the demon still in parish churches or chapels in Brittany.[110] Twelve of these feature Tree of Jesse iconography in some form or another, and more than half of those examples also depict the Virgin standing on a crescent moon.

Figure 6.12 *Tree of Jesse With Standing Virgin*, Wooden Sculpted Group, c.1500–25, Notre-Dame of Trédrez (Côtes-d'Armor)

(Photo: akg-images/picture-alliance)

Traditionally, the tempter in the Garden of Eden had been illustrated as a female-headed snake, wound around the Tree of Knowledge. However, it was only after the serpent had tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden that God cursed it to slither along the ground (Genesis 3:14):

> And the Lord God said to the serpent: Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

Accordingly, it seems that towards the end of the fifteenth century a new type of representation emerged that featured the serpent still able to walk on all fours. The Netherlandish artist Hugo van der Goes is credited with being the first to depict the tempter as a salamander with the head of a woman, in the Fall of Man/Lamentation diptych of c.1470–75 (Kunsthistoriche Museum, Vienna).[111] This influential and much copied image, seemingly for the first time, also showed the demon's hair braided into horns. Horns, although usually of a different colour to the demon's hair, are a feature of the large majority of these Breton carved groups and may, therefore, reflect van der Goes' influence. In some of the works, the hands are also portrayed as claws, and the feminine aspect is emphasised even further, with the depiction of the creature's naked breasts, as seen on the altarpiece found in the parish church of Saint Aignan, in Saint Aignan (Morbihan) (Figure 6.13). Where visible, the lower half of the demon's body remains snake-like, often wound around the trunk of the Tree of Jesse, thereby imbuing it with the qualities of the Tree of Knowledge.

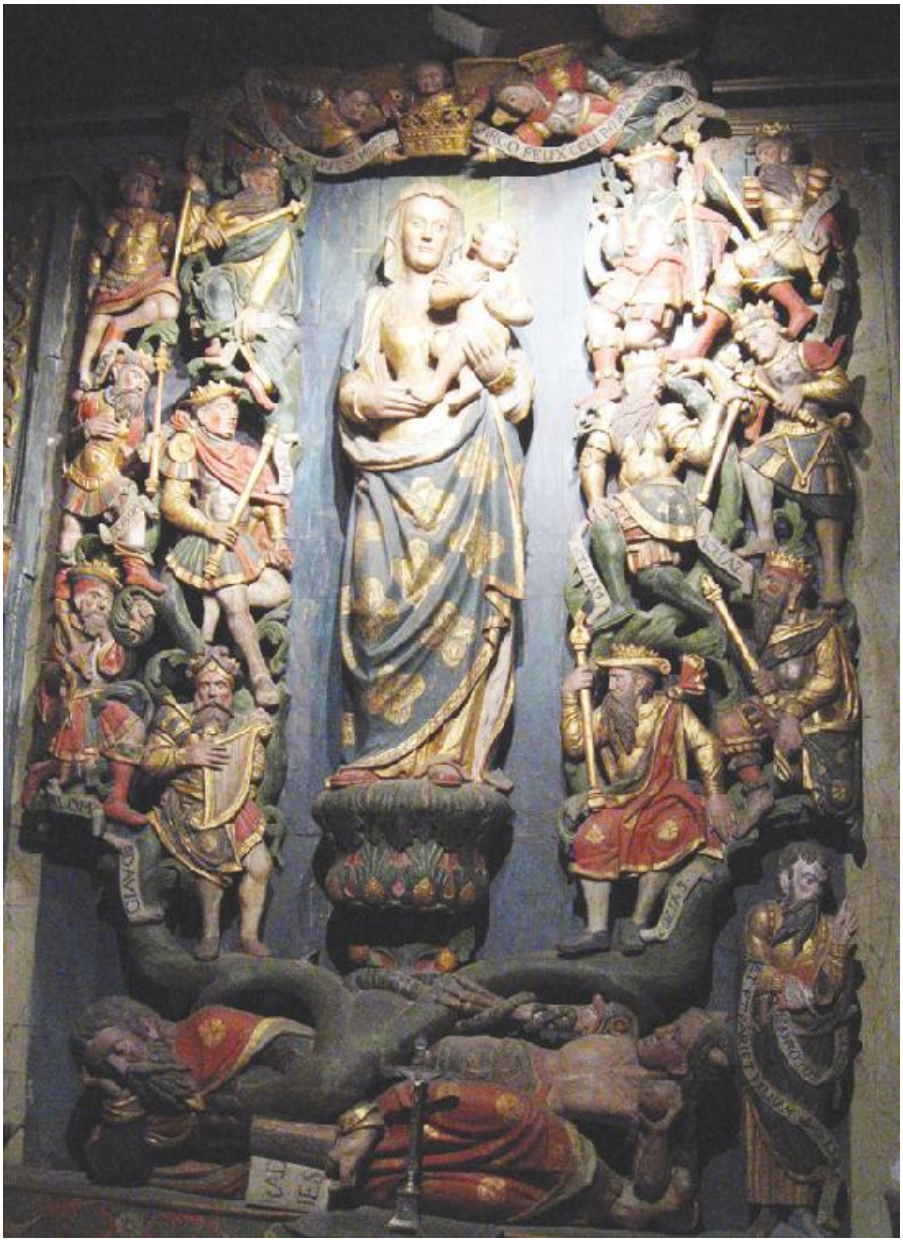


Figure 6.13 Tree of Jesse With Standing Virgin Altarpiece, Sixteenth Century, Church of Saint Aignan, Saint Aignan (Morbihan)

(Photo: © Dr Hiroko Amemiya)

By use of this demon-serpent polymorphic figure in conjunction with traditional Tree of Jesse imagery, these works emphasise the Virgin's importance in the story of salvation. In addition, as a direct reference to Isaiah's prophecy, Jesse can occasionally be seen with a Bible, as in the Saint

Aignan altarpiece. The popularity of this Tree of Jesse/Temptation of Eve imagery persisted, and an example from the late sixteenth or even early seventeenth century, can be found in the church of Saint-Thégonnec in Finistère.[112]

Tree of Jesse iconography in Brittany therefore seems, in some respects, to be different in nature to that of Normandy and the Champagne region. Later in date, it can be found not only in stained glass, but also on carved altarpieces and small wooden sculpted groups, which often combine the Tree of Jesse motif with a representation of the Temptation of Eve. However, while several of the windows appear to reflect a particular interest in the Crucifixion, underlining the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy, the primary function of the majority of windows, as in Normandy and Champagne, was to honour the Virgin as the descendant of King David and highlight her important role in the story of salvation. Once more, the subject was a popular choice for individual patrons, perhaps suggesting that there was also a dynastic element to these donations. The influence of foreign models on Tree of Jesse iconography in Brittany is less obvious than in Normandy or the Champagne region. Nevertheless, indirect influences, filtered through the Normandy and Champagne windows, appear to have had an impact, and Antwerp altarpieces may have provided a contemporaneous source for the Crucifixion windows.

Conclusion

The renewed popularity of Tree of Jesse iconography in parts of northern France in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries manifested itself mainly in stained glass for parish churches, and their format owed much to foreign influences. The windows in Normandy were the first to break with the traditional representation of the subject in French stained glass. However, although this new form of representation had its origins in the Low Countries, no one specific area or source can be identified. The first of the new wave of windows was donated to Évreux Cathedral by Louis XI, who may have been concerned about his succession, using the iconography as a means of validating his royal line by establishing an analogy between divine and temporal royalty. This use of Tree of Jesse iconography as a way of expressing royal pedigree has a long history, and subsequent windows for parish churches can be seen as an attempt to imitate this kingly tradition. Political stability and a healthy economy, following the Hundred Years' War, meant that in addition to the aristocracy, there were a growing number of affluent families who

commissioned windows. In addition to wishing to appear munificent, the use of coats of arms and/or portraits, alongside images of the royal genealogy of Christ and the Virgin, meant that donors' of these Jesse windows could broadcast their own rank and status and, by association, infer their own distinguished lineage. With so many windows now in fragments, and so much restoration undertaken since the Revolution, even windows that currently display no obvious devices may have once had inscriptions or armorials that would have identified their original donors.

The circulation of imported prints and codices into northern France, such as the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and Books of Hours, were a valuable source of images for donors and artists alike. For example, several Normandy windows feature Trees of Saint Anne that appear to owe much to Netherlandish models. In addition, the presence of foreign artists, attracted by the flourishing glass-making industry, had an impact on the local production of windows. This is most apparent in the work of Arnold of Nijmegen in Rouen, who was also responsible for a new form of Tree of Jesse representation that was subsequently copied by another generation of Normandy glass-painters.

Although the popularity of Tree of Jesse windows in northern France is often linked with the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, this seems tenuous, as the majority of these windows seem to be primarily concerned with establishing the Virgin's Davidic ancestry and celebrating her role in the Incarnation, the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy. Exceptions to this rule are the Breton windows that combine the Tree of Jesse with the Crucifixion, which may have been influenced by a similar conflation of themes in Antwerp carved altarpieces. Although less formulaic than the Normandy windows, the inclusion of Saint Joseph in the Champagne windows is, likewise, unique. Devotion to Saint Joseph was well established in the Netherlands by the late fifteenth century, but it was still relatively unusual in France. The saint's presence in Champagne stained glass may therefore be explained by the writings of the Reims theologian, Jean de Gerson, although it is also likely that the model for their representation may derive from Netherlandish sources.

Many in Normandy welcomed the reform movement. In 1562, the Siege of Rouen was the catalyst for the first instances of iconoclasm in the region. Similarly, the massacre at Wassy, in 1562, signalled the beginning of the Wars of Religion in Champagne. Both events effectively marked the end of the great period of stained glass production in northern France, and few examples of Tree of Jesse iconography can be found in Normandy and Champagne from the 1550s. In Brittany the iconography appears to have remained popular for slightly longer, where, in addition to stained glass, the motif was employed for small wooden retables or carved groups. Here a new form of representation

emerged that conflated the Tree of Jesse with the Temptation of Eve. The depiction of the 'tempter' in these images may also owe a debt to Netherlandish models, derived from the work of Hugo van der Goes. Although some examples exist from the early seventeenth century, it seems, based on the number of extant objects, that the subject eventually also became unfashionable for Breton religious art. Already rendered obsolete by changing attitudes to religious imagery resulting from the Reformation movement in the Netherlands and Germany, the Tree of Jesse motif entered another period of relative obscurity in northern France.

Notes

1. Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 77–78 and 205. First discussed in *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen âge en France*, 72–73 and 227, and Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 146–149 and 157–162.
2. For a general discussion of the economic and political situation in France following the Hundred Years' War, see Martha Wolff ed., *Kings, Queens and Courtiers, Art in Early Renaissance France*, Exh. Cat. (Chicago and New Haven: Distributed by Yale University Press, 2011).
3. For a discussion of Rouen's reversal of fortunes see Linda E. Neagley, *Disciplined Exuberance, The Parish Church of Saint-Maclou and Late Gothic Architecture in Rouen* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 65–71.
4. Normandy was recovered by the French crown after the victory against the English at the Battle of Formigny in April 1450, and the recapture of Cherbourg.
5. See Marcel Aubert, *Le Vitrail en France* (Paris: Larousse, 1946), 75–85, Martine Callias Bey, et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, CVMA, France VI (Paris: Monum, 2001), and Martine Callais Bey and Véronique David, *Les Vitraux de Basse-Normandie*, CVMA, France, VIII (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006).
6. Jean Lafond, 'Le Renaissance', in Marcel Aubert et al. eds., *Le Vitrail Français* (Paris: É ditions 2 Mondes, 1958), 215.
7. Upper Normandy, one of the smallest regions of France in terms of size, encompasses the departments of the Eure and Seine-Maritime. Of the one thousand, three hundred and sixty-seven stained glass windows that survived in this region following the French Revolution, eight hundred and sixty-three belong to the sixteenth century, with seven hundred and fifty-six to the first half, and approximately thirty featured Tree of Jesse iconography. Lower Normandy is made up of three departments; Manche to the west and Calvados and Orne to the east. Out of three hundred and eighty windows recorded at one hundred and twenty sites, ten featured Tree of Jesse iconography; the majority of these are in the eastern part of the region, adjacent to Upper Normandy.
8. For a description of this and the other windows of the axial chapel see 'Évreux Cathédrale Notre-Dame', in *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 147–148.

9. Blumenshine, 'Monarchy and Symbol in Later Medieval France: The Tree of Jesse Window at Évreux', 19–57.

10. The Tree of Jesse window in Saint Étienne in Beauvais, Picardy (1522–24) attributed to Engrand le Prince, has also been associated with royal propaganda. See Lawrence Lee, George Seddon and Francis Stephens, *Stained Glass* (London: Mitchell Beazley, 1976) 138–139.

11. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 144.

12. The Tree of Jesse window in Abbot Suger's new choir at Saint Denis, copied at Chartres, became the prototype for a number of other Jesse windows. See Richardson Johnson, *The Tree of Jesse in England and Northern France in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.*

13. There does not appear to be any particular significance to representations of Jesse in a sitting position and, as discussed in Chapter One, there are many examples of seated Jesses before this date. Furthermore, Saint Mary's Church in Morpeth, Northumbria, provides a fourteenth-century precedent for the representation of a seated Jesse in stained glass. Although this window underwent a considerable amount of restoration in the nineteenth century, which involved replacing much of the glass, that on either side of Jesse is original, indicating that Jesse was always a seated figure.

14. The tympanum contains the Trinity in the form of the Throne of Grace. As identified by Richardson Johnson in *The Tree of Jesse in England and Northern France*, 47, twelfth and thirteenth century Tree of Jesse windows in France are usually located to the north of the axis of the church. Conversely fifteenth and early sixteenth century Normandy Jesse windows are most often found in the axial chapel.

15. Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 143–145. Other authors refer to it as the '*formule normande*'. See for example Françoise Perrot, *Le Vitrail a Rouen* (Rouen: impr. Lecerf, 1972), 32.

16. In her footnotes, Lepape suggests that a fifth example might be added to her list, an anonymous drawing in the British Museum (BM Inv. 1895–9–15–1005), given a Dutch source by Arthur Popham at the British Museum in 1932. Although Popham suggested a date of c.1470–80 for the drawing, he believed that it was probably derived from a model that had already existed before 1450. See *Catalogue of Drawings by Dutch and Flemish Artist*, Vol. 5 (London: British Museum, 1932), 81. He appears to have based this assumption primarily on a figure of a turbaned man to the left of Jesse, who seems similar to a figure in the border of the Genesis page of a large fifteenth century Netherlandish Bible (British Library, Add. 15,254). However, as patterns were used again and again over many decades and across different workshops, to conclude that the primary source for this drawing existed pre 1450 seems too simplistic on this evidence alone.

17. Marc Gil, Cat. No. 27 in Annick Notter ed., *Fragments d'une Splendeur: Arras à la fin du Moyen Age* (Arras: Musée des Beaux-Arts d'Arras, 2000), 66–68. Arras in Artois was part of French Flanders in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

18. Max Friedländer, 'Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of Flemalle', in *Early Netherlandish Painting* (translated by Heinz Norden), Vol. II (Leyden: Sijthoff, 1967), 57, Catalogue C, No. 83.

19. In correspondence, Dr Garcia-Frias Checa, the conservator of Pintura Antigua at the Palacio Real, has suggested that the panel may date to the 1460s because of its possible connection to the Redemption Triptych in the Prado.

20. Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana codicibus manuscriptis recensita, etc., *Codices Urbinates latini/descripsit Cosimus Stornajolo*, Rome, 1902–1921, 20–21.

21. Schnü tgen-Museum, *Die Sammlungen des Baron von Hüpsch, Ein Kölner Kunstkabinett um 1800* (Cologne: Schnütgen-Museum, 1964), No. 72.

22. Camille Gaspar and Frédéric Lyna, *Les Principaux Manuscrits à Peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, Tome II (Brussels: Bibliothèque royale Albert ler, 1987), 122–124 (No. 239).

23. A copperplate engraving attributed to the Master of the Banderoles may be another example. Although dated c.1461–67, the Master of the Banderoles appears to have always borrowed his subjects and there is a high probability that this engraving is partly or wholly appropriated from an earlier design. See Erwin Vischer, *Formschnitte des Funfzehnten Jahrhunderts in der Grossherzogl. hof—und landesbibliothek zu Karlsruhe (Baden) mit erläuterndem text* (Strassburg: J.H.E. Heitz, 1912), 20–21.

24. Of the numerous Jesse windows to follow the Évreux model in Normandy, beautiful examples can be seen in the churches of Sainte Marie Madeleine in Verneuil-sur-Avre, c.1470; Saint Martin in Villequier, c.1525; Notre-Dame d'Touchet, c.1540, and Notre-Dame in d'Orbec, dating from the late fifteenth century. There are also some Normandy windows of this period that retain the reclining figure of Jesse, for instance the window at Saint Germain in Isneauville, c.1520. Furthermore, the tympanum of the central portal of Rouen Cathedral, which was reconstructed in the early sixteenth century, is decorated with a Tree of Jesse by Pierre Dèsolbeaux. Here the kings are depicted standing, whilst Jesse is depicted in a recumbent position.

25. Painton Cowen, *The Rose Window: Splendour and Symbol* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2005), 217. Another Tree of Jesse rose window can be found at Nogent-le-Roi in the department of Eure-et-Loir.

26. Nicola Coldstream, *Medieval Architecture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 53.

27. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 38. Similar objects have also been identified in the hands of the Christ Child in an early sixteenth century window in the church of Arnières-sur-Iton (Eure), and in a window at the parish church of Auppegard dating from 1544. For Netherlandish examples see the early sixteenth century panel by Jan Provoost (d.1529), the *Virgin and Child in a Landscape*, in the National Gallery; the *Virgin and Child* by the Master of the Embroidered Foliage (active c.1480–1510) in the Louvre, and the inner right wing of the *Adoration of the Holy Trinity* polyptych by Jean Bellegambe (1509–13) in the museum of Douai. For a further discussion regarding this theme see Jean-Pierre Suau, 'La fin d'un thème iconographique "flamand": La Vierge à l'Enfant Jésus au moulinet à noix des stalles de Saint-Bertrand-de-Comminges (vers 1525–1535)', *Extrait de la Revue de Comminges*, Tome CII (1989), 617–640. The spinning toy also appears in the calendar of a Book of Hours, use of Rome, printed in Paris in 1522 by Thielman Kerver, a German publisher who founded a printing house there in 1497.

28. It is possible that this window was not originally commissioned for the church of Saint Vincent as a recent archival discovery suggests that it was formerly in the church of Saint Andre-de-la-Ville in Rouen. See Michel Hérold et al., 'Vitrail de l'Arbre de Jessé in *Vitraux Retrouvés de Saint-Vincent de Rouen*, Exh. Cat., Rouen Musée des Beaux-Arts (Rouen: Ville de Rouen, 1995), 115. The glass-painter of this window employed a much more restricted palette than the painters of the Saint Maclou and Évreux windows, giving the Saint Vincent window an almost monochrome appearance. Although most of the figures are

executed in grisaille or *jaune d'argent*, a far richer treatment was used for the Virgin's robes, which has the effect of emphasising her importance even further. This approach continued to be popular in the years that followed, and was copied by the artists of the Jesse windows in Saint Jean-Baptiste in Elbeuf in c.1500, and the church of Saint Saëns in c.1510.

29. Mâle, *L'Art Religieux de la fin du Moyen-Âge en France*, 72–73, Jean Lafond, *Études sur L'Art du Vitrail en Normandy: Arnoult de la Pointe, Paintre et Verrier de Nimégue et les artists étrangers a Rouen aux XVe et XVIe siécles* (Rouen: Lecerf, 1912), 18, and Georges Ritter with Jean Lafond, *Maunuscrits a Peintures de l'École de Rouen, Livre D'Heures Normands* (Rouen and Paris: A. Lestringant and A. Picard, 1913), 55. Callias Bey et al., in *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 38–40, identify the importance of engravings, particularly those by Dürer, as a source of models for glass-painters, but do not specifically discuss Tree of Jesse iconography.

30. Other Books of Hours, use of Rouen, have similar renditions of the subject, for example KB 133D17 in the Koninklijk Bibliotheek, Hague, dated c.1475–1500, and Arsenal, Ms. 416 (fol.7), Paris, dating from the late fifteenth century.

31. Jean Lafond brought together much of the documentary evidence regarding Arnold of Nijmegen. His work was summarised in 'Arnoult de Nimègue et son Oeuvre', Etudes sur l'Art du Vitrail en Normandie, in *Bulletin de la Société des Amis des Monuments rouennais* (Rouen: Lecerf, 1930), 136–154, and in *La Résurrection d'un Maitre d'Autrefois, Le Peintre-Verrier Arnoult de Nimègue (Aert van Oort ou van Hort, Aert Ortkens, Arnoult de la Pointe)* (Rouen: Imprimerie Laine, 1942). Hilary Wayment in her article 'A Redis-covered Master: Adrian van den Houte (c.1459–1521) and the Malines/Brussels School', *Oud Holland*, Jaargang LXXXII (1967), 172–202, tries to unravel some of the confusion regarding the attributions to these different names.

32. Elisabeth von Witzleben, *French Stained Glass* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968) 74.

33. His windows appear not only in the churches of Rouen and the diocese, but also in Notre-Dame of Grand-Andely, Louviers, Conches and Saint Lô. For documentary evidence regarding some of these commissions see Lafond, 'Arnoult de Nimègue et son Oeuvre', 143–150.

34. The presence of thirteen kings is not unique, for example the *Bible Historiale* of Duke Jean de Berry (Arsenal, No. 5058, fol. 451), dating from the early fifteenth century, contains a Tree of Jesse miniature which also features thirteen kings.

35. Lafond, *La Résurrection d'un Maitre d'Autrefois*, 48. Similar deterioration to the faces of various figures can be found in the majority of Nijmegen's other Normandy windows, such as those of Fecamp, Louviers or Notre-Dame des Andelys. However, he must have become aware of the problems during his time in Normandy, as the technique was not used for his window at Conches.

36. Nijmegen was admitted into the Guild of Saint Luke of Antwerp in 1513.

37. The c.1525 Tree of Jesse window now in Saint George's, Hanover Square, London, has also been attributed to Nijmegen. This window, thought to have originally come from the Carmelite Convent in Antwerp, was brought to England sometime between 1750 and 1775. See Jean Helbig, 'Jacques Floris va-t-il enfin se revéler?', *Revue belge de l'archéologie et de l'histoire de l'art*, Vol. XIV (Antwerp, 1944), 129–141. Although this window was adapted by Willement in the nineteenth century, many similarities with the Saint Godard window are apparent, particularly when compared to a coloured drawing in the church's possession

by Bridgens, which shows the London window's previous arrangement.

38. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 33–35.

39. Callais Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Basse-Normandie*, 184–185.

40. '*En son vivant secrétaire du roi Charles [VII] et Alexise [Liée] sa femme*'. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 113.

41. For more information on these windows see Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*.

42. Wim Blockmans and Antheun Janse eds., *Showing Status: Representations of Social Positions in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 289 and 484.

43. See Mâle, *Religious Art in France, The Late Middle Ages*, 205; Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 297–301 and, Lepape, 'L'Arbre de Jessé: une image de l'Immaculée Conception?', 113–136.

44. Between 1460 and 1540 there were nine confraternities in Normandy dedicated to the festival of the Immaculate Conception, eight of which were in the diocese of Rouen. See Catherine Vincent, *Des charités bien ordonnées, les confréries normandes de la fin du XIII siècle au debut du XVI siècle* (Paris: Ecole Normale Supé rieure, 1988), 129.

45. Chas B. Newcomer, 'The Puy at Rouen', *PMLA*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1916), 211–231. In 1520 the confraternity's prosperity was increased greatly when a papal bull, authorised by Pope Leo X, gave it numerous privileges and indulgences over the other confraternities.

46. Séverine Lepape considers it significant that in 1510, Jean Le Lieur, a prince of the Puy of the Immaculate Conception, was also a canon and senior member of the administration of Rouen Cathedral, at a time when the canons commissioned the Tree of Jesse carving for the exterior central portal of the West Door. Lepape, *Représenter la parenté du Christ et de la Vierge*, 299–300.

47. Jean Lafond, 'L'Art Chrétien dans nos Vitraux Normands', Extract from the *Journal de Rouen* (Des 24 et 29 Aout 1919), (Rouen: Imprimerie du Journal de Rouen, 1920), 7.

48. Although the inclusion of the blossoming branch of the Tree of Jesse is usually included as one of these symbols, suggesting an association, this is by no means exclusive.

49. See Jean Lafond, 'L'Église Saint-Vincent de Rouen et ses Vitraux', *Ministère de l'Education Nationale, Extrait des Actes du Congrès des Societes Savantes (1956)*, (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale presses universitaires de France, 1958), 59–77, Hérold et al., *Vitraux Retrouvés de Saint-Vincent de Rouen* and, Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 399–402.

50. In total thirteen remaining windows in Normandy illustrate events from the life of Saint Anne; the earliest of these appears in Saint Maclou (1440–50), although the large majority date to the sixteenth century.

51. The presence of the letter 'P', on the axe of Joseph the Just, may be the mark of the glass-painter. See Véronique Chaussé and Laurence de Finance, 'Vitrail de l'Arbre de Sainte Anne, 1520–1530', in Hérold et al., *Vitraux Retrouvés de Saint-Vincent de Rouen*, 91.

52. These windows all share a similar bright palette; the male faces are painted in a red and brown grisaille, while the women have oval faces surrounded by striking white veils. The signature of a local glass-painter, Jean le Vieil, has been identified on the window of the Life of Saint Anne. See Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Haute-Normandie*, 51.

53. Lafond, 'L'Église Saint-Vincent de Rouen et Ses Vitraux', 71 and, Chaussé and Finance 'Les

Verrières de L'Atelier Rouennais', in Hérold et al., *Vitraux Retrouvés de Saint-Vincent de Rouen*, 71.

54. Jean Lafond, 'A Propos Des Vitraux Du XVe Siecle Provenant De L'Eglise Saint-Vincent et Transférés a la Cathédrale de Rouen', *Revue des Sociétés Savantes de Haute-Normandie, Histoire de l'art*, No. 4 (1956), 38.

55. Lafond, L'Art Chrétien dans nos Vitraux Normands, 8.

56. Originally this would have also included part of the department now known as Aisne, which borders Belgium to the northeast. Here a sixteenth century Tree of Jesse window attributed to Mathieu Bléville can be found in the church of Saint Martin at Bucy-le-Long.

57. There were a series of six fairs spread throughout the year, each lasting six weeks.

58. Spufford, *Power and Profit, The Merchant in Medieval Europe*, 143–151.

59. This was given a further stimulus in 1486 when Charles VIII issued an edict restoring two of the annual fairs.

60. Troyes was on the route for the procession of the kings of France, and major renovations took place for the entry of Louis XII in 1500, and for the successive entries of François I in 1521, 1529, 1533.

61. This is even more remarkable given that a fire in 1524 destroyed almost a quarter of the city of Troyes.

62. Martine Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Champagne-Ardennes*, CVMA, France IV (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1992).

63. Alexandre Assier, *La Champagne, Les Arts et Les Artistes II* (Paris: Aubry, Champion, A. Claudin, 1876), 71. See also Danielle Minois, *Le vitrail à Troyes: les chantiers et les hommes, 1480–1560* (Paris: Presses de l'Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2005), 351.

64. Only four of the original medieval panels of this window remain. See Elizabeth Carson Pastan, '"And He Shall Gather Together the Dispersed": The Tree of Jesse at Troyes Cathedral', *Gesta*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (1998), 232–239. This window can now be found in a side chapel to the north side of the nave. See Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Champagne-Ardennes*, 218 and 222.

65. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Champagne-Ardennes*, 233, and Minois, *Le vitrail à Troyes*, 351. *Jehan de Marisy et damoyselle Guillemette Phelipe, sa femme, ont donnè ceste verrière en l'honneur de Dieu et de sainct Pierre; l'an mil CCCCIIIIxx et XVIII.*

66. See Assier, *La Champagne, Les Arts et Les Artistes*, 71 and Léon Pigeotte, *Étude sur les travaux d'achèvement de la Cathédrale de Troyes, 1450 à 1630* (Paris: Didron, 1870), 47–48.

67. Jean Charles Courtalon-Delaistre, *Topographie historique de la ville et du diocèse de Troyes*, Vol. 1, 399 and Vol. 3, 381–382, Troyes 1783/4.

68. Courtalon-Delaistre, *Topographie historique de la ville et du diocèse de Troyes*, Vol. 1, 399, and Vol. 3, 118.

69. Jean Lafond also discusses how the donors of the cathedral windows were able to choose their own subjects. See *Les vitraux de la cathédrale Saint-Pierre de Troyes* (Paris: Societe Francaise d'Archeologie, 1957), 57–58.

70. Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Champagne-Ardennes*, 115 and 149.

71. Minois discusses the rise of many Troyenne bourgeoisie families in the years following the

Hundred Years' War. See Minois, *Le vitrail à Troyes*, 37–38. In addition, many other merchant dynasties were founded elsewhere in the region, such as the Colberts of Reims. See Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos ed., *Le Guide du Patrimoine—Champagne Ardenne* (Paris: Hachette, 1995), 57.

72. For further information regarding these windows see Callias Bey et al., *Les Vitraux de Champagne-Ardennes*, 166, 416 and, 179

73. Françoise Bibolet, *Histoire de Troyes* (Troyes: Editions de la Maison du Boulanger, 1999), 138–139.

74. Bibolet, *Histoire de Troyes*, 143.

75. See Bolger Foster, *The Iconography of Saint Joseph in Netherlandish Art, 1400–1550*. The Carmelites and Franciscans had adopted the feast of Saint Joseph in the late fourteenth century, and thereafter Joseph's feast day appeared in the missals of a number of Netherlandish cities. For the development of the cult in France, see Gregory Stephen d'Elia, *The Extraordinary Devotion to Saint Joseph in Early Modern France* (MPhil Thesis: University of Oxford, 1993), which discusses the flourishing of the cult in the seventeenth century, reflecting the spirit of post-Tridentine reforms and the writings of Teresa of Ávila.

76. See 'The Birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary', in Voragine, The *Golden Legend, Reading on the Saints*, Vol. II, 153.

77. The feast of Saint Joseph was introduced to the Roman Calendar by Sixtus IV and was elevated to a double rite by Innocent VIII at the end of the fifteenth century.

78. Brian Patrick McGuire, *Jean Gerson and the Last Medieval Revolution* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2005), 261–262. The Gospel of Pseudo Matthew states that Mary and Joseph were both from the tribe of Judah and of the house of David.

79. For a discussion of representations of Joseph as a young man after the Reformation, see Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du XVI siècle du XVII et XVIII siècle* (Paris: Colin, 1951), 316.

80. The Tree of Jesse window in Saint Étienne Cathedral in Sens (Burgundy) was commissioned from Lyénin Varin, Jean Verrat and Balthazar Godon de Troyes in 1503–4, although Assier believes that Macardé stood in for his uncle. Similarities between the Jesse window in Troyes Cathedral and the window of Sens Cathedral are apparent. Assier, *La Champagne, Les Arts et Les Artistes II*, 79–80.

81. Moses beheld the burning bush that continued to burn but did not lose its verdure (Exodus 3:2). In the same way Mary conceived a son but did not lose her virginity. Gideon's fleece became moist with heavenly dew, but only the fleece received the dew while the entire surrounding area remained dry (Judges 6:36–40). Likewise, Mary alone is filled with the divine dew and no one else is found worthy.

82. Watson cites the twelfth century *Légendaire de Cîteaux* (Dijon Ms. 641 fol.40v), and the thirteenth century English psalter in the Munich Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Ms. Clm 835). Watson, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 90–91. The lower part of the Tree of Jesse inner left wing panel (1455–60), currently in Darmstadt and attributed to a master active in the Lower Rhine and Cologne area, also features Gideon and with his Fleece and Moses with the Burning Bush, alongside representations of Aaron and Ezekiel.

83. For an English translation of the *Speculum* text see Albert C. Labriola and John W. Smeltz, *The Mirror of Salvation, An Edition of British Library Blockbook G. 11784* (Pittsburgh and

Cambridge: Duquesne University Press and James Clarke & Co, 2002, 30–31.

84. Véronique Boucherat, who studied the use of models in Troyenne sculpture and stained glass, gives many examples of how engravings by foreign artists, particularly Dürer, Schongauer and Israel van Meckenem, were used by Troyenne glass-painters as models. See Boucherat, *L'art en Champagne à la fin du Moyen Âge; productions locales et modèles étrangers (v.1485–1535)* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005).

85. Paul Biver, *École Troyenne de Peinture sur Verre* (Paris: G. Enault, 1935). Chapter Fifteen looks specifically at the use of cartoons in Tree of Jesse windows.

86. Following Biver's lead, Marcel Aubert identified certain motifs repeated up to twenty-seven times across different windows, and concluded that there may have been between fifty to seventy-five cartoons in circulation, many of which he believed were reused over several years or reworked. See Aubert, *Le Vitrail en France*, 93.

87. Assier, *La Champagne, Les Arts et Les Artistes II*, 77–84, lists the known glass-painters of the sixteenth century and attributes windows to them where possible.

88. See Zsuzsanna van Ruyven-Zeman, *Stained Glass in the Netherlands Before 1795* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011).

89. Troyenne sculpture also features many representations of the saint teaching the Virgin to read. See Pierre-Eugène Leroy, *Sculptures en Champagne au XVI siècle* (Dijon: Faton, 2009), 59–65 and, *Trésors D'Art de l'École troyenne XII au XVI siècle*, Exh Cat (Troyes: Musée de Vauluisant, 1953), 10.

90. These windows can be found at Chessy-les-Prés, Longpré-le-Sec, Polisy, Thennelières and Voué.

91. Claudie Pornin, *Catalogue des Collections de Vitraux des Musées d'Art et d'Histoire de Troyes* (Troyes: Editions des Musé es d'art et d'histoire de Troyes, 1998), 11.

92. See Françoise Gatouillat and Michel Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, CVMA, France, VII (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2005).

93. Nixon, *Mary's Mother*, 164. Small sculptural groups featuring Saint Anne with the Virgin and Child were particularly popular in Brittany. See Victor Henry Debidour, *La Sculpture Bretonne: Etude d'iconographie religieuse populaire* (Rennes: Plihon, 1953), 88–90. Saint Anne was also a popular subject for Brittany windows, with nineteen described in the Corpus Vitrearum study.

94. Pierre Gringore designed a Tree of Jesse for a pageant to celebrate the entry of Queen Claude into Paris in 1517, and although Claude and François occupy the topmost branch of the tree, it is clear that it is the Queen's ancestors who are represented, with Anne of Brittany occupying the branch beneath her. See Kipling, *Enter the King*, 69–71.

95. Louis-Michel Gohel, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne* (Rennes: Ouest-France, 1981), 20–30.

96. The window is signed in three places. See Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 185.

97. The tympanum contains new glass and incorporates the coat of arms of Monsignor Fauvel, who was bishop from 1947 to 1968.

98. British Library, Yates Thomson 19, fol.18r.

99. The theme of the Crucifixion and Passion was a popular one for Brittany windows, with at least sixteen identified in the region. Gohel has suggested that the inspiration for these

windows may have come from Netherlandish or even Bavarian models. See Gohel, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 24.

100. Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 147.

101. Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 287–288.

102. Debidour, *La Sculpture Bretonne*, 42–43 and 76. Debidour also suggests Jesse can be found sleeping at the foot of the cross in the Calvary at Laz in Finistère.

103. Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 279–280.

104. The attribution of all three windows is based on the window at La Ferrière, which is inscribed with the date 1551 and the monogram MB. It has been suggested that the same cartoons were used for the silhouettes of the kings in all three windows and that they were painted in a similar way. See *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 64–65 and 252–253.

105. Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 292–293, 304–305 and, 316. In the chapel of Locmaria the upper part of the window is modern and therefore the figure of the Virgin in missing.

106. For further information on the nature of Breton Pardons, see Anatole le Braz, *The Land of Pardons* (translated by Frances M. Gostling) (London: Methuen & Co, 1906).

107. See Gatouillat and Hérold, *Les Vitraux de Bretagne*, 296 and 83 for further details of these windows.

108. In addition, small English alabaster bas reliefs featuring Tree of Jesse iconography may have been imported, an example can be seen in the chapel of Notre-Dame-des-Fleurs at Plouharnel (Morbihan).

109. Debidour, *La Sculpture Bretonne*, 77. The imagery is thought to allude to God's words to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. These were seen as a prefiguration of the Virgin, who was predestined to bring about the redemption of man from the sin of the first Eve. Genesis 3:15, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel'. This idea relates back to Corblet's proposal, discussed in the Introduction, that representations of the tree growing out of Jesse's body may have been designed to provide an analogy with Adam. See Corblet, 'Étude Iconographique sur L'Arbre de Jessé', 3–39.

110. Hiroko Amemiya, *Vierge ou Démone, Exemples dans la statuaire bretonne* (Spézet: Keltia Graphic, 2005). This study builds on the work of Lois le Thomas, 'Les Démones Bretonnes, Iconographie Comparée et Étude Critique', *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique du Finistère*, Vol. 87 (Brest, 1961), 188–190, who catalogued thirteen of these retables and carved groups.

111. For a full description of this image see Robert A. Koch, 'The Salamander in Van der Goes' Garden of Eden', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, Vol. 28 (1965), 323–326, and John Hand, Catherine Metzger and Ron Spronk, *Prayers and Portraits: Unfolding the Netherlandish Diptych*, Exh. Cat. (Washington; Antwerp; Cambridge; New Haven: National Gallery of Art; Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten; Harvard University Art Museums; Yale University Press, 2006), 94–98.

112. Illustrations of these wooden altarpieces and many other French examples can be found in a limited edition book of photographs by Etienne Madranges, *L'Arbre de Jessé de la Racine à l'Esprit* (not printed for the open market) Gémenos: Groupe Horizon, 2007.

Conclusion

Tree of Jesse iconography has a long history, spanning many centuries, yet despite the destruction caused by war, iconoclasm, natural disasters and changing tastes, the survival in large numbers of so many different objects that date from the mid-fifteenth to early sixteenth centuries, is clearly extraordinary. As these objects predominantly originated in the Low Countries and Germany, they provide overriding evidence of a significant cultural movement, one with deep roots in the religious beliefs of the day. This book is the first detailed investigation to focus on the late medieval use of the Tree of Jesse, and it attempts to expand a traditional analysis of the subject beyond the relatively narrow confines of a purely iconographic study. By trying to understand the particular circumstances for the employment and reception of the motif and associated iconography, it has been possible to demonstrate how works that incorporate it functioned, challenging previous misconceptions and oversimplifications. As this study has illustrated, the Tree of Jesse was not simply a genealogy of Christ, or of the Virgin. It evolved into something more complex, which could be modified to satisfy specific religious requirements. It was also able to function on a more temporal level, reflecting not only a clerical preoccupation with a sense of communal identity, but also a more general interest in displaying a family's heritage, continuity and/or social status. Consequently, by the late medieval period, the Tree of Jesse had become a flexible symbol, one whose inherent integrity could be augmented to convey complicated ideas in a format that would have been immediately recognised and understood by a contemporary audience.

The use of the Tree of Jesse in the fourteenth century, as a prefiguration for the Birth of the Virgin in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, was clearly a pivotal moment, yet it has never been fully appreciated just how much this text might have acted as the catalyst for changing perceptions regarding the function of the iconography. With the advent of printing, the *Speculum* became one of the most widely disseminated and influential works of the late Middle Ages, and the subject's employment, in a predominantly Marian context, gave it a new emphasis, providing the motif with renewed vitality. It could now be seen in relation to Mary's early life and genealogy, its primary function to establish the Virgin's Davidic ancestry, thereby reconciling any

confusion regarding the genealogy of Christ that may have arisen from the Gospels. There can be little doubt that the widespread distribution of these books in northern Europe from the mid-fifteenth century meant that they became a valuable source of reference, greatly influencing the visual vocabulary of the period. Crucially, not only did the *Speculum* highlight Mary's role in the Incarnation, but it also highlighted the part played by her mother, Saint Anne. The association of the motif with this saint, whose cult was to flourish from the second half of the fifteenth century, was also to have a major impact on Tree of Jesse iconography.

Devotion to Saint Anne was promoted by a series of Lives, which told the story of the saint's three marriages and extended family, often referred to as the *Trinubium* or Holy Kinship. Propagation of this myth seems to have been a particular concern of many distinguished theologians in the Netherlands and Germany, who believed that Saint Anne provided a worthy example for pious emulation. Northern humanists, increasingly critical of the celibate life, could use Saint Anne and the Holy Kinship to promote the importance of family life and motherhood and, by virtue of the miracles assigned to her, Saint Anne soon came to be seen as a suitable protector for both men and women, regardless of profession or social class. The analysis of several works in Chapter Two revealed just how many objects appropriated the Tree of Jesse motif to demonstrate that the Holy Kinship gave Saint Anne great power, building on the audience's innate understanding of the subject. Variations in this new type of iconography can also be observed; for example, in some of the works discussed, Joachim, whose cult grew in the wake of his wife's, seems to have been at least as important as Saint Anne. In other examples, the Tree of Jesse has been completely taken over, implying a much more specific role for the Virgin's mother in the redemptive process. It was also possible to trace a development from the late fifteenth century conflations of the Tree of Jesse and Holy Kinship to fully evolved representations in the early sixteenth century. It seems that these later images were then often abridged or adapted to reflect the individual concerns of their patrons. Whichever the case, it has been argued that the abbreviated image still remained a visual signifier for the larger iconography. It also appears that some of the works examined may have had a commemorative function, linking ideas of holy and earthly lineage, a recurring theme throughout this study.

It has been proposed by some scholars that by the late fifteenth century, the Tree of Jesse had actually come to be seen as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin. However, the examination of several works here suggests that although there was obviously an association between the cult of Saint Anne and the conception of the Virgin, there is no evidence that the Tree of Jesse was only employed by those who wished to demonstrate their support

for the concept. Furthermore, it was shown that the new forms of Tree of Jesse representation that emerged at this time can clearly be seen to reflect the beliefs of both the maculists and immaculists alike. When considering these images it is important to understand the circumstances of their patronage, as without context they can easily be misunderstood.

The Carmelites, who were well established in the Netherlands and Germany by the second half of the fifteenth century, played an important part in spreading the veneration of Saint Anne. They, in particular, founded many confraternities dedicated to the saint, and these in turn commissioned altarpieces to decorate their chapels. The examination of the wing panels of an altarpiece from the Carmelite-administered Brotherhood of Saint Anne in Frankfurt clearly shows how the Order invoked Tree of Jesse iconography to help them create a strong identity, one based on an ancient and distinguished heritage. Iconological analysis revealed the extent to which skilful appropriation of the motif was able to communicate the Carmelites' unique relationship with the matrilineal family of Christ, reinforcing the myths surrounding their foundation. In addition, it was proposed that by highlighting their role in the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, this altarpiece may have been intended as some sort of marketing tool, designed to advertise the benefits of confraternity membership to the rich patricians and wealthy merchants, who made up the Brotherhood's existing and future sponsors.

The common assumption that other works that incorporate these particular forms of Carmelite imagery must therefore have also been commissioned for Carmelite houses or churches was challenged, as closer examination shows that for some their provenance is more complicated. The account of the vision on Mount Carmel was not only restricted to Carmelite texts, and it was suggested that other religious groups may have adopted Carmelite imagery as part of the wider story of the life of Saint Anne. Support for this hypothesis was provided by several works that were evidently linked to non-Carmelite houses. Once again, this study has shown that where context remains uncertain, we must be cautious in our interpretation, as the function of the imagery in these works will be different to those specifically commissioned for the Carmelites.

The examination of several other objects demonstrated how the Dominicans also used the Tree of Jesse motif to satisfy their own iconographic requirements. For example, analysis of the exterior wings of an altarpiece, originally on the high altar of the Dominican church in Frankfurt, clearly illustrates how the Order used an analogy between the Tree of Jesse and a tree of distinguished past members to portray their illustrious theological tradition. Moreover, this may have been an attempt to re-establish the authority and superiority of the Dominicans in the face of increasing Carmelite activity in

the city. Elsewhere, it seems that the Dominicans exhibited this type of iconography in an entirely private setting, and it was proposed that it was used in these circumstances to help nurture a sense of community and belonging. In addition, this imagery in Dominican prints may have had a didactic function, used to help in the instruction of new members of the Order.

A discussion of further works supported the idea that imagery, based on the Tree of Jesse motif, was also adopted by other orders to describe the relationship between different parts of their communities. This was illustrated by the examination of the Franciscan Tree tapestry, commissioned either by, or on behalf of, the Franciscan pope, Sixtus IV. Designed as a powerful piece of papal propaganda, this work combines the Tree of Jesse with the Franciscan tradition of the *Lignum vitae*. In the face of increasing internal tension, one of its functions may have been to show the common origin of the various factions of the Order. The examination of other Tree of Jesse works, commissioned for different orders, provides evidence of how religious groups would also adopt attributes from each other, to help enhance their own identities. It is evident that the Tree of Jesse was a very useful template for religious orders, one whose intrinsic meaning could be manipulated to reflect their own particular philosophy.

Following the Reformation, the dislocation and destruction of many works has meant that is often difficult to understand their purpose. The survival of the Schöllenbach altarpiece thus provides a rare opportunity to examine the patronage and function of a work acquired for a small pilgrimage site in the Odenwald district of Germany. The sheer size and quality of the Schöllenbach altarpiece, commissioned from a southern German, perhaps Ulm-based workshop, makes a major statement about the donor's wealth and status. Consequently, the choice of the Tree of Jesse as the primary subject for this retable may be seen as a deliberate strategy, expressing the donor's distinguished temporal lineage by association with the ancestors of Christ and, more particularly, using this analogy to support the donor's claim to rule over Schöllenbach and its neighbouring lands. In addition, Schöllenbach, with its miracle spring, was a popular site on a major pilgrimage route, which would have attracted visitors from a wide area, making an important contribution to the local economy. The Schöllenbach altar's size and subject matter were intended to make a significant impression on these travellers, and it can be seen to have been designed to connect with both their spiritual and physical needs. For a marriage to be successful during this period, it was essential that it produced many healthy children. A detailed analysis of the altarpiece's overall iconographic programme revealed that the reputation of the miracle spring as an aid to fecundity is reflected not only in the Tree of Jesse motif itself, but also in the emphasis on Saint Elizabeth and the inclusion of Saint

Anne on the interior wings.

The existence of almost identical iconography on the much smaller altarpiece in the neighbouring pilgrimage chapel of Amorsbrunn may be a testament to the success of the Schöllenbach retable. Amorsbrunn was also on the site of a miracle spring, and by imitating the iconography of the Schöllenbach altarpiece, the chapel's administrators could have hoped to imply that their miracle spring was just as powerful and efficacious, thereby diverting passing pilgrim traffic on its way to the larger site.

The Tree of Jesse also became a speciality of some southern Netherlandish workshops, and the motif can be found on nearly a quarter of all extant carved altarpieces made in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century. Typically, Jesse appears in the lower register of the *caisse*, with the tree rising up to frame the Crucifixion in the upper register. Although this iconography has theological roots in the writings of Peter Damian, this study has suggested other reasons for its popularity, proposing that it may also reflect contemporary concerns regarding Luther's Theology of the Cross, and changing attitudes concerning the use of religious imagery. With their multi-compartmental format, these altarpieces were able to encompass the two major themes of Christian doctrine, Incarnation and Salvation, while the Tree of Jesse provided an iconographically coherent and decorative visual device to link the two subjects.

A detailed comparison of three retables, where the Tree of Jesse appears in the centre of the *caisse* rather than in the lower register, provided further useful information relating to patronage and function. The Bocholt, Pailhe and Gifhorn altar-pieces all originated in Antwerp sometime between c.1510 and 1530, and similarities between them indicate the use of common workshop models. However, although previous scholarship has assumed that a great deal of standardisation was employed to speed up production, significant differences between the works implies that their iconographic programmes may have been modified to suit the theological needs of their patrons. It would seem that although some ready-made altarpieces may have been produced for sale on the open market, it was more common for ready-made sections to be combined with customised elements to create a unique altarpiece that was made to order. Furthermore, while the Tree of Jesse is used with scenes from the Life of Christ and the Virgin to convey the messianic nature of Isaiah's prophecy, and highlight the Virgin's role in the Incarnation, a detailed examination of the iconography of the Gifhorn, Bocholt and Pailhe works indicates that they may have been particularly designed around the season of Advent, which marked the beginning of the liturgical year.

The renewed popularity of the Tree of Jesse motif in Normandy, Champagne and Brittany manifested itself mainly in stained glass for parish churches. The

close examination of the windows in this study revealed just how much they owe to Netherlandish and Germanic influences. It appears that the presence of foreign artists such as Arnold of Nijmegen was a significant factor, and that the circulation of imported prints and codices were a valuable source of reference for donors and artists alike. The windows in Normandy were the first to break with the traditional representation of the subject in French stained glass. However, although this new form of representation had its origins in the Low Countries, the previous assumption that this was a particularly Flemish iconography was contested, and many examples were proffered that vividly illustrate how no one specific area or source can be identified. The first of the new wave of windows was donated to Évreux Cathedral by Louis XI, who may have been concerned about his succession, intentionally using the iconography as a means of validating his royal line. The use of Tree of Jesse iconography as a way of expressing noble pedigree was well established by the fifteenth century, and the Jesse windows commissioned for parish churches in northern France may reflect a similar desire by the aristocracy and bourgeoisie to promote their own superior, or newly acquired, social status, imitating what they perceived of as a royal tradition.

Although the popularity of Tree of Jesse windows in northern France is often linked to the concept of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, this was questioned, as the majority appear to be primarily concerned with establishing the Virgin's Davidic ancestry and celebrating her role in the Incarnation. Exceptions to this rule are the Breton windows that combine the Tree of Jesse with the Crucifixion, which may have been influenced by a similar conflation of themes in Antwerp carved altarpieces. Less formulaic than the Normandy windows, the inclusion of Saint Joseph in the Champagne windows is likewise unique. It was suggested that the saint's presence may be explained by the writings of the Reims theologian, Jean de Gerson, although it is also likely that the model for this type of representation derives from Netherlandish sources.

Little stained glass was produced in Normandy and Champagne after the 1550s, although the Tree of Jesse motif continued to be popular in Brittany until a slightly later date. Here, in addition to windows, it was shown that the subject was employed for small wooden retables or carved groups, where a new form of representation emerged that conflated the Tree of Jesse with the Temptation of Eve, which may also owe a debt to Netherlandish models.

In the Netherlands and Germany, although some later works do exist, the decline in surviving examples suggests that by the late 1530s religious dissension was already having a major impact on the production of works to incorporate Tree of Jesse iconography. Beginning with the controversy over indulgences in 1517, Luther's ideas had gradually spread throughout Germany

and, before long, Antwerp printers were circulating copies of his works in Dutch, ensuring that by 1525, he had also become a household name in the Netherlands. Ultimately, the progress of the Reformation, combined with the religious wars in France, marked the end of the renewed popularity of Tree of Jesse iconography in northern Europe. Post-Reformation society considered typology both unfashionable and inappropriate, and relatively few northern European works that date from the latter part of the sixteenth century onwards can be identified.

The visual material collected for this study was wide-ranging and provides undeniable evidence of the renewed interest in Tree of Jesse iconography that occurred in parts of northern Europe in the late medieval period. However, the purpose of this research was not only to assemble a body of works, but also to use the visual evidence, supported by contemporary texts whenever possible, to explore the factors behind the phenomenon. By employing a close contextual iconological approach, it has been possible to have a far greater understanding of how and why the Tree of Jesse was employed for individual groups of objects, the purpose of these objects and how the function of the motif might have differed, according to its use and location. The works discussed reflect the concerns and beliefs of their patrons, and their examination has revealed an iconography that was both dynamic and polyvalent, one that could be used to express the differing notions of piety and identity of a society on the brink of great religious and social change.

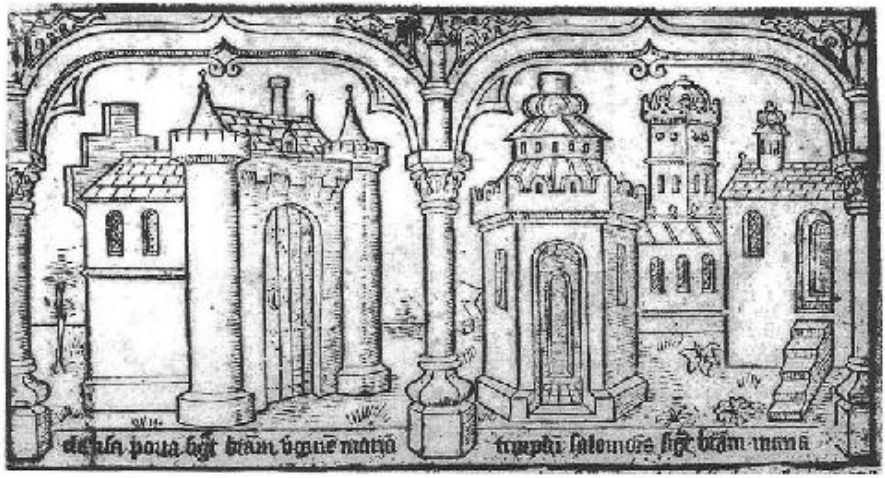
Appendices

Appendix 1

English Translation by Albert Labriola and John Smeltz of Chapter Four of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* Blockbook (British Library shelfmark G. 11784)

Chapter 4

In the previous chapter, we have heard the story of the annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and now let us consider her birth and lineage. The ancestry of Mary descends from the father of David [i.e., Jesse], about whom Isaias, inspired by the Holy Spirit, prophesied, "There shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse and a flower shall bloom from this root, and upon this flower the sevenfold grace of the Holy Spirit shall rest" (Isaias 11.1–2). This rod signifies Mary who is made fruitful by a heavenly dew and produces for us Christ, the most beautiful flower. In this flower are found seven efficacious remedies, which beget the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The seven remedies for the sickness of the soul are touch, perfume, fruit, color, leaf, juice, and taste, all contraries to the seven deadly sins. By touching this flower we reduce the tumor of pride and become humble to receive the gift of fear and a greater self-knowledge. When we meditate how Lucifer is punished for the arrogance of pride, we become humble and begin to fear God. If God is unwilling to endure pride in Lucifer's angels, much less does he wish to tolerate it in us. The angels had a special grace by which they were glorified, but what does lowly man have, and how shall he be glorified? By the perfume of this flower the hardness of the envious heart is softened begetting the gift of piety to extend compassion to the afflicted. An envious sinner is not touched by suffering, but a pious person is moved to pity and mercy by every hardship. This perfume is the example our Savior places before us. Because he is merciful and compassionate toward the afflicted, we, following his lesson, lament with those who weep and agonize in spirit with those who suffer in body. The fruit of the flower removes the madness of anger and teaches us the gift of science to live in harmony with our neighbors. The wrathful person has no mental circumspection and is unable to engage in good and decent conversation, but the gift of science teaches us to live well in this depraved society. Therefore, whosoever wishes to imitate the fruit of this flower, the works of Christ, must learn to live in harmony with others. By the color of this flower the paralysis of wrath is weakened and we are strengthened by the gift of fortitude to persevere. He who understands that the color of this flower represents Christ crucified neither dreads work nor suffers any punishment. If indeed an elephant fights at the sight of the blood of grapes (1 Machabees 6.34), how much more are we strengthened to work by the sight of the blood of Christ. Therefore, we devoutly gaze upon the rose color of this flower and labor cheerfully to persevere all our days. By the leaves of this flower we put to flight the dropsy of avarice and curb the desire for money by the gift of counsel.



The leaves of this flower are the words, works, and doctrine of Christ, all counseling us to despise the temporal and seek the eternal. Whoever endeavors diligently to study and retain this doctrine has the spirit of counsel within him and despises temporal possessions except for what is needed to help the indigent. By the juice of this flower the excess of gluttony is reduced, and through the gift of understanding we acquire knowledge. The green juice of the flower helps us to see more clearly, and the gift of understanding purifies the eye of the heart. Further, the gift of understanding teaches us to know the divine through the material. When we see the sun so bright or a flower so beautiful, we shall understand the sun's brilliance and the flower's beauty are from the creator. By the taste of this flower the sweetness of luxury turns sour and the soul delights in the gift of wisdom, the relishing of knowledge. After we have tasted the sweetness of the Holy Spirit, all pleasures of the flesh are bitter. Just as honey dulls the natural taste of food, so too relishing the Holy Spirit puts an end to all carnal pleasures. O how great is your sweetness, O Lord, hidden from those who fear you! Therefore, it is now evident that Mary is born in the line of Jesse, but how the flower blossomed is revealed in the figure of the closed door. Ezechiel in a vision beheld the closed door, which would never be opened for all eternity (Ezechiel 44.1–3). Only the Lord could pass through the closed door, a figure for Christ's miraculous birth. Let him who is able understand! Christ was not born in the same way we are born. It would not be a wondrous event to open a door and pass through, but it is exceedingly miraculous to pass through a closed door. Also, Solomon built a temple dedicated to the Lord that mystically prefigured the birth of the Blessed Mary. The temple had three pinnacles to signify Mary's triple golden celestial crown: the first crown signifies virginity, for this is the way she is known; the second is the crown of martyrs, for she is a martyr in spirit; and the third is the crown of preachers and teachers because she is the master of the evangelists and the apostles. The exterior of the temple was constructed of dazzling white marble and the interior was decorated with the most elegant gold. Mary radiates the dazzling splendor of the purest chastity and inwardly possesses the gold of the most precious charity. O how radiantly beautiful is the chaste generation! O how beautiful is Mary resplendent with charity! There was a ladder in the temple used to climb upward; in Mary is a divinity, a grace opening for us an ascent to heaven. O good Jesus grant through the merits of your most holy mother the ability to ascend to the glory of God the Father.

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Appendix 2.1

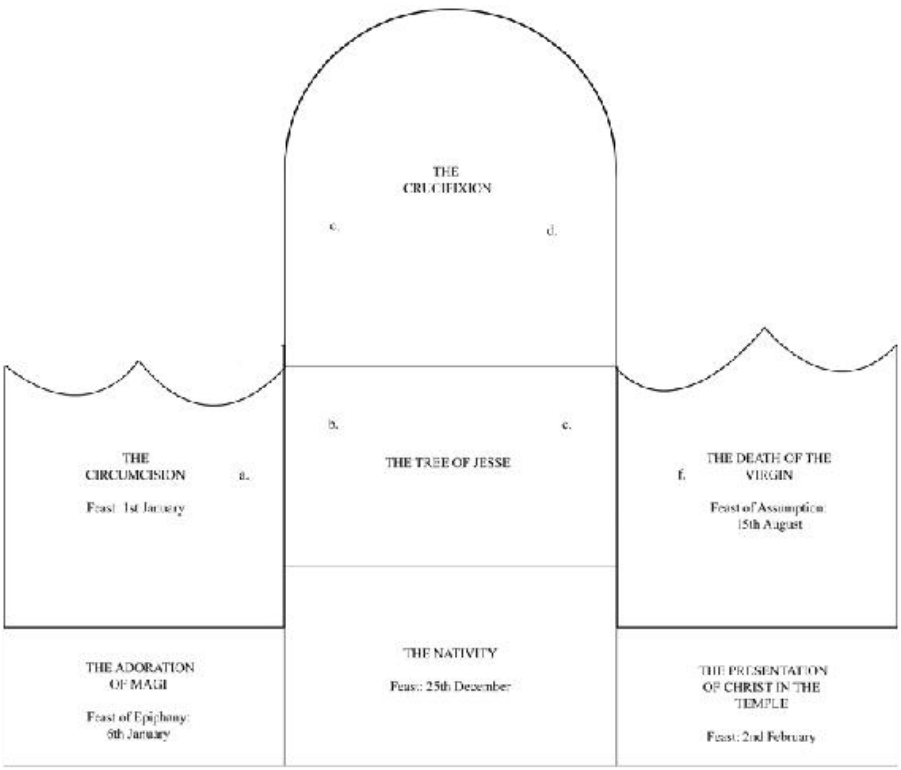
Antwerp Altarpieces With Tree of Jesse Iconography

Belgium	
Enghien	Virgin Mary altarpiece, (Tree of Jesse on painted predella)
Neerharen	Passion Altarpiece (Jesse, now lost, was in lower register)
Bocholt	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Pailhe	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Denmark	
Viborg	Passion altarpiece
France	
Baume- les-Messieurs	Passion altarpiece
Maignelay	Passion altarpiece
Paris-St Germain l'Auxerrois	Passion altarpiece
Rennes	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Germany	
Aldenhoven	Passion altarpiece (now destroyed)
Barmen	Passion altarpiece
Dorsten	Passion altarpiece (now destroyed)
Gifhorn	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Güsten	Passion altarpiece
Kempen	Saint Anne altarpiece
Kleve	Passion altarpiece
Kranenburg	Passion altarpiece
Langerwehe	Passion Aaltarpiece

Linnich 2	Passion altarpiece
Merl	Passion altarpiece
Mersch	Passion altarpiece
Müstermaifeld	Passion altarpiece
Müntz	Passion altarpiece
Siersdorf	Passion altarpiece
Straelen	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Süchteln	Passion altarpiece
Titz	Passion altarpiece
Xanten	Passion altarpiece
Great Britain	
Radley College	Passion altarpiece
Carlisle Cathedral	Passion altarpiece
Oxburgh Hall	Passion altarpiece (Jesse, now lost, was in lower register)
Norway	
Ringsaker	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Poland	
Żukowo	Passion altarpiece
Russia	
Saint Petersburg	Passion altarpiece
Sweden	
Botkyrka	Passion altarpiece
Nederluleå	Passion altarpiece
Skärkind	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Lofta	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Valö	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Västerås 2	Virgin Mary altarpiece
Västerlofsta	Passion altarpiece

Appendix 2.2

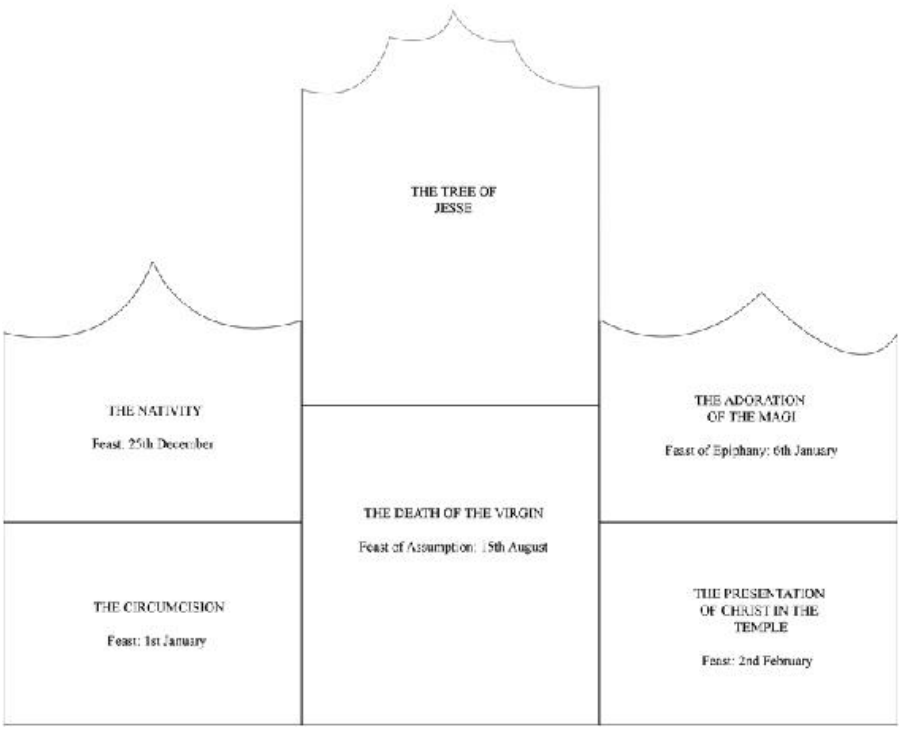
Diagram of the Pailhe Altarpiece



a. Marriage of the Virgin
b. Annunciation
c. Visitation
d. Angel appearing to Joseph
e. Massacre of the Innocents
f. Angel appearing to Joseph

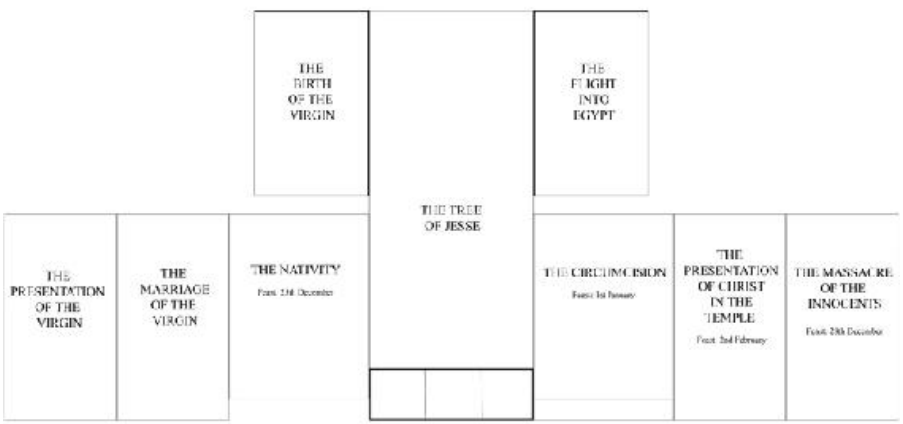
Appendix 2.3

Diagram of the Bocholt Altarpiece


THE TREE OF JESSE
THE NATIVITY
Feast: 25th December
THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI
Feast of Epiphany: 6th January
THE DEATH OF THE VIRGIN
Feast of Assumption: 15th August
THE CIRCUMCISION
Feast: 1st January
THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
Feast: 2nd February

Appendix 2.4

Diagram of the Gifhorn Altarpiece


THE BIRTH OF THE VIRGIN
THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT
THE PRESENTATION OF THE VIRGIN
THE MARRIAGE OF THE VIRGIN
THE NATIVITY
THE TREE OF JESSE
THE CIRCUMCISION
THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

Exterior Wings: Adoration of the Magi

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